



Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205
agriculture.arkansas.gov
(501) 225-1598



Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture

[Arkansas Department of Agriculture](https://www.agriculture.arkansas.gov)

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Contact: Ayden Massey, (501) 813-6012

ayden.massey@agriculture.arkansas.gov

Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest Entries Accepted Through June 14

LITTLE ROCK, AR – Entries are being accepted for the annual Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest, sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. Applicants may be any school, early childhood education facility, or alternative learning environment that had a school garden during the 2023-2024 school year or is planning to start a garden in the 2024-2025 school year.

“School gardens are valuable educational tools that help students develop healthy eating habits, participate in hands-on activities, and learn about Arkansas agriculture,” said Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward. “We are grateful for the generosity of Farm Credit and their continued support of this program.”

Entries for the contest will be accepted through June 14, 2024, and the application can be found at cognitoforms.com/ArkansasAgriculture1/ArkansasGrownSchoolGardenOfTheYearContest2024. Winners will be announced in the fall of 2024.

“As a farmer-owned cooperative, we are excited to continue our support of teachers and projects that engage Arkansas students in food production and agricultural sustainability. Through these partnerships, we can ensure that the valuable role of Arkansas agriculture remains top-of-mind for the next generation,” said Farm Credit of Western Arkansas President and CEO, Brandon Haberer, on behalf of the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas.

Applicants are eligible to apply for the following categories:

- Best Start-Up School Garden Proposal - \$500 Award
- Best Education-Based School Garden - \$500 Award
- Best Harvest Partnership School Garden - \$500 Award
- Best Community Collaboration School Garden - \$500 Award
- Best Overall School Garden - \$1,000 Award
- Champion of School Garden Sustainability - \$1,000 Award

More information about the Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest can be found at agriculture.arkansas.gov/arkansas-department-of-agriculture-programs/farm-to-school/school-gardens/arkansas-grown-school-garden-of-the-year-contest/ or by contacting Jessica Chapman at jessica.chapman@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

The Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas are locally-owned and managed financial cooperatives that are part of the national Farm Credit System. They are dedicated to making a significant and positive impact on agriculture, rural communities, and youth in agriculture through their statewide partnership. Three independent associations come together to form Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas – Farm Credit of

Western Arkansas, AgHeritage Farm Credit Services, and Farm Credit Mid-America. The Farm Credit System has supported rural America since 1916 and remains committed to its original mission of providing reliable, dependable credit to farmers, ranchers and rural homeowners.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture, forestry, and natural resources conservation to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while sustaining natural resources and ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit agriculture.arkansas.gov/. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

