



Pre-Conference Events

Pre-Conference Farm Tour

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

New and Beginning Farmers are Invited
Separate Registration for this Event

Fat Rabbit Farms is a small market garden
outside of Hot Springs, Arkansas.
Join us for a walking tour of the farm
before the kickoff of the Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo.

\$5.00 per person

Registration is required.

Space is limited.

Go to ArkansasGrown.org/arkansas-grown-conference-expo to register.

Welcome Reception

Join us for a casual reception and tour of Origami Sake
the evening before the Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo begins.

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Origami Sake

2360 E Grand Ave

Hot Springs, Arkansas

Space is limited.



THURSDAY

Registration Opens 7:00 a.m. in Convention Center Lobby

Horner Hall **Opening General Session**

8:00 a.m.

Welcome

Wes Ward, Secretary, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Arkansas Weather Now and How it is Trending Due to Climate Change

John Lewis, Senior Forecaster, National Weather Service

Federal Ag Labor Update

Michael Marsh, President and CEO, National Council of Agricultural Employers

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Workshops

12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Lunch Break in Exhibit Hall / Expo

2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Workshops

5:00 p.m.

Hospitality Suites

Embassy Suites Room 904: Arkansas Association of Grape Growers

Embassy Suites Room 928: Arkansas Agritourism Association

7:00 p.m.

Evening Event at Crystal Ridge Distillery

Trolleys run from Embassy Suites and Hotel Hot Springs to event from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.



Thursday

Workshop Schedule

Room 102 Arkansas Association of Grape Growers (AAGG)

- 9:00 a.m. AAGG Annual Meeting
Grant Opportunities for Commercial Vineyards and Wineries
- 10:00 a.m. Identification, Mediation, and Prevention of Grapevine Winter Injury in Arkansas
- 11:00 a.m. Disease Management in Grapes
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Costs and Considerations for Establishing a Vineyard and Winery in Arkansas
- 3:00 p.m. Grape Cultivar Recommendations for Arkansas
- 4:00 p.m. Cultivating Customers: How to Grow Your Company Sales and Connections



Workshop Schedule: Thursday

Room 104 **Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts (AACD)** **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

- 9:00 a.m. What's Up with WOTUS? Waters of the United States
- 10:00 a.m. Heir Property in Arkansas
- 11:00 a.m. Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Division
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Conservation Districts
- 3:00 p.m. Grower Panel
- 4:00 p.m. Planting for Pollinators – Go Native, Grow Native

Room 201 **Vegetable Production**

- 9:00 a.m. Managing Insect Pests in Vegetables: Which Conventional and Organic Products are the Right Choice for You?
- 10:00 a.m. High Tunnel Vegetable Productions: The Basics
- 11:00 a.m. Introduction to Growing Lettuce in a High Tunnel
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Vegetable Disease Management 101
- 3:00 p.m. Nutsedge Management in Plastic Mulch
- 4:00 p.m. Cucurbit Trials in Arkansas: Which Varieties are Right for Your Farm?



Workshop Schedule: Thursday

Room 203 Food Systems and Safety

- 9:00 a.m. Value-Added Food Business Basics at Home or a Commercial Kitchen
- 10:00 a.m. AFIC@MCO: Supporting the Arkansas Food Processing Industry
- 11:00 a.m. Intro into Spring Creek Food Hub
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. USDA GAP Audits (Good Agricultural Practices)
- 3:00 p.m. The Basics of Food Preservation
- 4:00 p.m. Food Handlers and Food Safety

Room 204 Blueberry Production

- Facilitators: Ryan Neal, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension Agent
Clyde Fenton, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension Agent
- 9:00 a.m. Arkansas Blueberry Industry Update
 - 9:30 a.m. Grower Profiles: Matt Varoz, Hatch Farm, LLC; Pat Ford, Renee's Berry Garden
 - 10:15 a.m. Irrigation Strategies for Blueberries
 - 11:00 a.m. Blueberry Diseases
 - 11:45 a.m. Wrap Up Discussion of Industry Needs for Future Meetings
 - 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
 - 2:00 p.m. Arkansas Apiary Laws and Bee Health



Workshop Schedule: Thursday

Room 205 General Farm Business

- 9:00 a.m. Arkansas Farm Bureau Support for Specialty Crop Farmers
- 10:00 a.m. Law Enforcement at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture: How We Can Help
- 11:00 a.m. Supporting our Livestock and Poultry Producers
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Business Trends from a Market Manager's Perspective
- 3:00 p.m. Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant Program: Opportunities for the Arkansas Local Food System



FRIDAY

Registration Opens at 7:00 a.m. in Convention Center Lobby

Horner Hall

General Session

8:00 a.m.

Developing a Culture of Engagement

John Kennedy, Speaker. Author. Strategist., Agritourism Life

The Future of Your Farm

Gary Matteson, SVP Beginning Farmer and Rancher Programs and Outreach, The Farm Credit Council

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Workshops

12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Lunch Break in Exhibit Hall / Expo

2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Workshops

5:00 p.m.

Hospitality Suites

Embassy Suites Room 904: Arkansas Pecan Growers Association

Embassy Suites Room 928: Arkansas Organic Network Launch

Northwest Arkansas Food Systems Initiative

No Conference Events Planned for Friday Evening



Friday

Workshop Schedule

Room 102 Arkansas Agritourism Association (ArAA)

- 9:00 a.m. Making a Case for Agritourism
- 10:30 a.m. Agritourism Roundtable Discussion
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. It's Not Selling, It's Creating an Opportunity to Buy
- 3:00 p.m. Panel Discussion
- 4:30 p.m. ArAA Membership Meeting

Room 104 Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- 9:00 a.m. Farm Service Agency Opportunities for Farmers and Ranchers
- 10:00 a.m. Helping People Help the Land
- 11:00 a.m. USDA Rural Development Funding Opportunities for Agriculture Producers and Rural Communities
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. The Importance of Crop Insurance
- 3:00 p.m. Resources for Arkansas Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families



Workshop Schedule: Friday

Room 201 Mid America Strawberry Growers Association

- 9:00 a.m. Marketing Materials
- 9:30 a.m. Spray Programs
- 10:00 a.m. Tip Production / Plant Availability
- 11:15 a.m. Strawberry IPM Guide and Apps
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Strawberry Plug Production at McNitt Growers
- 3:15 p.m. Strawberry Disease Management
- 4:00 p.m. Open Discussion

Room 203 Food Systems and Safety

- 9:00 a.m. Establishing a Produce Safety Culture for Any Size Produce Farm
- 10:00 a.m. Food Safety Plans for Farms and Manufacturers
- 11:00 a.m. Introduction to Arkansas Produce Safety Program and Food Safety Modernization Act
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Small Farm Fruit and Vegetable Washing
- 3:00 p.m. Review of Considerations and Costs of Value-Added Food Production from Surplus Produce
- 4:00 p.m. Best Practices for Keeping Microgreens Safe from Cultivation to Consumption



Workshop Schedule: Friday

Room 205 General Farm Business

9:00 a.m. Arkansas Farm Bureau Support for Specialty Crop Farmers

10:00 a.m. Customers Over Marketing

11:00 a.m. The Next California Project

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. American Farmland Trust

3:00 p.m. Apiary Laws and Bee Health



SATURDAY



Registration Opens at 7:00 a.m.

Horner Hall
8:00 a.m.

General Session
Managing Stress on the Farm
Jennifer Conner, Arkansas Heart Hospital

Exhibition Center
8:00 - 11:30 a.m.
12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Arkansas Grown & Arkansas Made Showcase
Invitation Only Buyers Event
Open to the Public



Saturday

Workshop Schedule: Saturday

Room 102 Organic Farming

- 9:00 a.m. Transition to Organic Partnership Project (TOPP) Resource Showcase
- 10:10 A.M. Organic Pest Management Strategies that Work for Open Field Production
- 11:00 a.m. Workshop: Finding Organic Pest Solutions That Work
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Nuts and Bolts of Organic Certification
- 3:00 p.m. Organic Success Stories Panel
- 4:15 p.m. World Café Needs Assessment

Room 104 Floral and Garden

- 10:00 a.m. Gardening in the Natural State
- 11:00 a.m. Composting
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Pollinator Friendly Gardens
- 4:00 p.m. Apiary Laws and Bee Health



Workshop Schedule: Saturday

Room 201 Arkansas Pecan Growers Association (APGA)

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome
- 9:05 a.m. Pecan Varieties
- 10:00 a.m. Tri-County Pecan Team are Boots on the Ground in Arkansas
- 10:30 a.m. Break
- 10:45 a.m. Pecan Research Updates from the Nobel Research Institute
- 11:30 p.m. Natural Resources Conservation Service Program Updates for Pecans
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 1:00 p.m. Test Your Pecan Knowledge!
- 1:45 p.m. Insect Management in Pecans
- 2:30 p.m. Break
- 2:45 p.m. Pecan Growers' Forum
- 3:15 p.m. Arkansas Pecan Growers Association Business Meeting



Workshop Schedule: Saturday

Room 203 Tree Fruits

- 9:00 a.m. What are you thinking? Considerations for New Orchards
- 10:00 a.m. Building a Spray Program for Peaches in Arkansas
- 11:00 a.m. Orchard Floor Weed Management
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Roundtable Discussion

Room 205 General Farm Business

- 9:00 a.m. Coffee Talk: Farmer Health
- 10:00 a.m. Selecting the Right High Tunnel – Preparation, Install, and Management
- 11:00 a.m. Beginning Farmer Program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Efficiency with Equipment
- 3:00 p.m. Vertical Farming



Workshop Schedule: Saturday

Room 207 Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association (ABGA)

- 9:00 a.m. Association Member Meeting
- 9:30 a.m. Basics of Blackberry Production
- 10:00 a.m. Variety Recommendations and New Releases
Q & A begins at 10:30 a.m.
- 11:00 a.m. Overview of Blackberry Diseases
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO
- 2:00 p.m. Farm Profile: Andre "Farmer Dre" Gradinariu, Gardeners Orchard and Bakery
- 3:00 p.m. Marketing and Agritourism for Berries
- 4:00 p.m. Recap and Reminders for 2024 Season

Room 208 Arkansas Farmers Market Association (AFMA)

- 9:00 a.m. Introduction
- 9:10 a.m. Ready. Start. Grown! Resources for your Small Business
- 9:30 a.m. Food Freedom in Farmers Markets
- 10:00 a.m. Promoting Your Market *and*
Market Growth, How to Cultivate A Stronger Customer Base
- 11:00 p.m. Increasing Food Access by Accepting SNAP/EBT at your Farm or Farmers
Market with MarketLink
- 11:30 p.m. Modern Online Farmers Market Management
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO



Workshop Schedule: Saturday

Room 208 Arkansas Farmers Market Association, cont.

2:00 P.M. Updates from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture

2:15 p.m. Farmers Market Panel

3:45 p.m. American Farmland Trust

Room 209 Food Systems and Safety

9:00 a.m. Little Rock Growers: A Community of Food Producers Supporting Community Change

10:00 a.m. The Building an Arkansas Agricultural Network Development (BAAND) Project: Let's BAAND together, a facilitated session to identify what you need to be a community food producer

11:00 a.m. Top Three Sales Strategies for Wholesale

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Understanding Living Soils

3:00 p.m. Homesteading in Arkansas

4:00 p.m. What to Expect During a Produce Safety Inspection - Arkansas Produce Safety Program



Workshop Descriptions

Workshop Descriptions: Thursday

Room 102 Arkansas Association of Grape Growers (AAGG)

- 9:00 a.m. AAGG Annual Meeting**
Grant Opportunities for Commercial Vineyards and Wineries
Doug Meyers, Owner, Rusty Tractor Vineyard
- 10:00 a.m. Identification, Mediation, and Prevention of Grapevine Winter Injury in Arkansas**
Amanda McWhirt, Extension Specialist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension
Aaron Cato, Extension Specialist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension
- 11:00 a.m. Disease Management in Grapes**
Phillip Brannen, Professor and Extension Fruit Pathologist, University of Georgia

Review of the state of the art in disease management of grapes.
- 12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO**
- 2:00 p.m. Costs and Considerations for Establishing a Vineyard and Winery in Arkansas**
Doug Hausler, Owner, Keels Creek Winery and Vineyard

The average vineyard size in the US is between 5 and 10 acres, which can produce between 10 and 40 tons of grapes (600 and 1500 gallons of wine). Before starting your first planting of vines or making your first commercial quantity of wine, a good business plan would require a good faith effort in estimating the costs of your "adventure". The startup of Keels Creek Winery and Vineyard will serve as a template for that estimation.
- 3:00 p.m. Grape Cultivar Recommendations for Arkansas**
Renee Threlfall, Research Scientist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

Discuss table, juice, and wine grape cultivars recommended for Arkansas.
- 4:00 p.m. Cultivating Customers: How to Grow Your Company Sales and Connections**
Katherine Daniels, Business Consultant & Entrepreneur, KD Consulting



Workshop Descriptions: Thursday

Room 104 **Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts (AACD)**
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

9:00 a.m. **What's Up with WOTUS? Waters of the United States**
Brigit Rollins, Staff Attorney, National Agricultural Law Center

This session will examine the recent changes to the definition of WOTUS, and what those changes mean for Arkansas.

10:00 a.m. **Heir Property in Arkansas**
Rusty Rumley, Senior Staff Attorney, National Agricultural Law Center

This session will cover intestate succession and practical solutions dealing with heirs' property situations in Arkansas.

11:00 a.m. **Arkansas Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Division**
Christy Steward, Environmental Program Coordinator, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

In this presentation, learn of opportunities offered at the state level for financial tools that support efficiently and responsibly managing and protecting our water and land resources for sustainability, health, safety, and economic benefit.

12:00 p.m. **LUNCH & EXPO**

2:00 p.m. **Conservation Districts**
Debbie Moreland, Program Administrator, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts

This presentation will explain conservation districts and how they serve farmers and ranchers across the state.



Workshop Descriptions: Thursday

Room 104 **Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts (AACD)
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), cont.**

3:00 p.m. **Grower Panel**

Butch Eggers, Wye Mountain Flowers & Berries
James Meeks, Triple M Farm
Debbie Moreland, Program Administrator, AACD

Eggers and Meeks have a wide range of experiences and will provide firsthand commentary on specialty crop farming. Eggers retired from the Pulaski County Conservation District board but continues to be involved. Meeks continues to farm in Ashley County and remains on that conservation district board.

4:00 p.m. **Planting for Pollinators – Go Native, Grow Native**

Ryan Parker, Arkansas State Coordinator, Quail Forever

Join Quail Forever staff in a presentation and discussion on creating native habitat for monarch butterflies, native bees, and other pollinators and wildlife in Arkansas. We will dive into common native pollinators, the importance of native wildflower diversity, how to grow these habitats, and available cost-share programs to help make pollinator habitat a reality.



Workshop Descriptions: Thursday

Room 201 Vegetable Production

9:00 a.m. Managing Insect Pests in Vegetables: Which Conventional and Organic Products are the Right Choice for You?

Aaron Cato, Extension Specialist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

10:00 a.m. High Tunnel Vegetable Productions: The Basics

Taunya Ernst, High Tunnel and Urban Ag Instructor, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

Are you currently using your tunnel for lettuce or thinking of adding some production? This talk will cover all aspects of growing lettuce in a high tunnel including choosing the right varieties, ensuring you have the correct fertility program, and some of the pests you may expect to encounter.

11:00 a.m. Introduction to Growing Lettuce in a High Tunnel

Taunya Ernst, High Tunnel and Urban Ag Instructor, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

Are you currently using your tunnel for lettuce or thinking of adding some production? This talk will cover all aspects of growing lettuce in a high tunnel including choosing the right varieties, ensuring you have the fertility program, and some of the pests you may expect to encounter.

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Vegetable Disease Management 101

Rebecca A. Melanson, Associate Extension Professor and Extension Specialist, Mississippi State University

Revisit the basics of disease management and learn how to think like a plant pathologist to improve disease management in commercial vegetable production. This presentation will highlight disease management methods that can be used in an integrated pest management (IPM) program for both conventional and organic commercial vegetable production to reduce and manage diseases! A new mobile app and pest management resource for commercial vegetable production, MyIPM for Vegetables, will also be showcased. The presentation will explore MyIPM for Vegetables content and provide useful tips for navigating through the app



Workshop Descriptions: Thursday

Room 201 **Vegetable Production, cont.**

3:00 p.m. Nutsedge Management in Plastic Mulch

Hannah Wright Smith, Weed Specialist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

Sedges are without a doubt the most problematic pest of vegetables grown on plastic. This talk will cover strategies you can employ to prevent issues with these weeds, and how to use some herbicide options that are available.

4:00 p.m. Cucurbit Trials in Arkansas: Which Varieties are Right for Your Farm?

Matt Bertucci, Assistant Professor, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension
Rachel Woodey-Pumford
Drew Kirkpatrick

This talk will cover the results from Dr. Matt Bertucci's cucurbit variety trials here in Arkansas, which include cantaloupes, pumpkins, watermelons, and more!

Room 203 **Food Systems and Safety**

9:00 a.m. Value-Added Food Business Basics at Home or in a Commercial Kitchen

David Hill, Program Associate, Food Systems and Food Safety, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

Basic requirements for creating a food business in a commercial space or from your home.

10:00 a.m. AFIC@MCO: Supporting the Arkansas Food Processing Industry

Darryl Holliday, Executive Director, Arkansas Food Innovation Center

Join us for an insightful presentation that delves into the pivotal role of food processing in shaping the future of the Arkansas food industry. Our discussion will cover a range of topics, exploring the significance of food trends, adaptability, and the resources of the Market Center of the Ozarks.



Workshop Descriptions: Thursday

Room 203 **Food Systems and Safety, cont.**

11:00 a.m. **Intro into Spring Creek Food Hub**

Anthony Mirisciotta, Executive Director, Spring Creek Food Hub

Get to know Spring Creek Food Hub.

12:00 p.m. **LUNCH & EXPO**

2:00 p.m. **USDA GAP Audits (Good Agricultural Practices)**

Zac Wellman, Program Manager, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Overview of Federal/State Inspection Service

3:00 p.m. **The Basics of Food Preservation**

Amber Hairston, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension Agent

Food Safety and Basics of Food Preservation

4:00 p.m. **Food Handlers and Food Safety**

Valerie Turner, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension Agent

Julie Goings, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension Agent

Learn how to handle food properly to prevent foodborne illnesses and protect your clientele.

Room 204 **Blueberry Production**

Facilitators: Ryan Neal, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension Agent
Clyde Fenton, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension Agent

9:00 a.m. **Arkansas Blueberry Industry Update**

Clyde Fenton, Grower, UA System Division of Agriculture, Searcy County

History of Arkansas blueberry industry with a snapshot of the present and vision for the future.



Workshop Descriptions: Thursday

Room 204 **Blueberry Production, cont.**

**9:30 a.m. Grower Profiles:
Buying an Established Farm**
Matt Varoz, Hatch Farm, LLC

Farm profile. Our experience with buying and operating an older blueberry farm. The technology we have found to stay chemical free. Results of rejuvenating older plantings as well as transplanting established bushes.

Personal Experience with Blueberry Operation
Pat Ford, Renee's Berry Garden

Grower's presentation on personal experience with his blueberry operation.

10:15 a.m. Irrigation Strategies for Blueberries
Jay Robbins, Irrigation Associate, Irrigation Mart

Practical approaches to blueberry irrigation

11:00 a.m. Blueberry Diseases
Jonathan Oliver, Plant Pathology, University of Georgia

Presentation on common blueberry diseases.

11:45 a.m. Wrap Up Discussion of Industry Needs for Future Meetings
Ryan Neal, Grower, UA System Division of Agriculture, Benton County

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Arkansas Apiary Laws and Bee Health
John Martin, Apiary Inspector, Arkansas Department of Agriculture
Jacob Bates, Apiary Inspector, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

The presentation will cover Arkansas state apiary regulations and what to expect when inspectors come to your bee yard.



Workshop Descriptions: Thursday

Room 205 General Farm Business

9:00 a.m. Arkansas Farm Bureau Support for Specialty Crop Farmers

John McMinn, Director, Commodity Activities & Economics, Arkansas Farm Bureau

10:00 a.m. Law Enforcement at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture: How We Can Help

Billy Black, Chief Law Enforcement Officer, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

11:00 a.m. Supporting our Livestock and Poultry Producers

Patrick Fisk, Director, Livestock & Poultry Division, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Cheri Ellis, Egg & Poultry Division Manager, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Business Trends from a Market Manager's Perspective

Roby Brock, CEO, Talk Business & Politics; Founder, Market at Chenal

Roby Brock shares global and national trends and the impact they have on our state.

3:00 p.m. Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant Program: Opportunities for the Arkansas Local Food System

Karen Reynolds, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Amanda Philyaw Perez, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

Angela Gardner, Arkansas Small Business & Technology Development Center

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is receiving \$5.6 million from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to improve food supply chain operations and strengthen local food systems throughout the state. Eligible entities include agricultural producers, nonprofit organizations, for-profit entities, local governments, tribal governments, and institutions. This presentation discusses the state plan and resources available to applicants.



Workshop Descriptions: Friday

Room 102

Arkansas Agritourism Association (ArAA)

9:00 a.m.

Making a Case for Agritourism

John Kennedy, Agritourism Life

10:30 a.m.

Agritourism Roundtable Discussion

John Kennedy, Agritourism Life

12:00 p.m.

LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m.

It's Not Selling, It's Creating an Opportunity to Buy

John Kennedy, Agritourism Life

3:00 p.m.

Panel Discussion

John Kennedy, Agritourism Life

Panel: Culinary, Farm Stay, Agri-tainment, Markets

4:30 p.m.

ArAA Membership Meeting

Room 104

Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

9:00 a.m.

Farm Service Agency Opportunities for Farmers and Ranchers

Doris Washington, State Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency

This presentation will provide information about Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs and loans and how to get started working with FSA.

10:00 a.m.

Helping People Help the Land

Katy Brantley, State Urban Conservationist, NRCS

Andres Aponte, District Conservationist

This presentation will explain how to get started working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and review multiple programs and opportunities in Arkansas.



Workshop Descriptions: Friday

Room 104 **Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts (AACD)
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), cont.**

11:00 a.m. **USDA Rural Development Funding Opportunities for Agriculture Producers
and Rural Communities**

Tim Smith, Rural Business Director, USDA Rural Development
Steve Mosher, Program Coordinator, USDA Rural Development

This presentation will share various funding opportunities available through
USDA Rural Development for agricultural producers and rural communities.

12:00 p.m. **LUNCH & EXPO**

2:00 p.m. **The Importance of Crop Insurance**

SeRena M. Hill, Navigator Project Director, UA System Division of Agriculture,
Southern Risk Management Education Center

The Crop Insurance Navigator Program works to enhance the understanding and
use of federal crop insurance by producers historically underserved by the crop
insurance sector.

3:00 p.m. **Resources for Arkansas Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families**

Jody Bergstrom, Chief Executive Officer, Camp Alliance

This presentation will share resources for Arkansas service members, veterans,
and their families, such as CampConnect, a platform used to share career
opportunities and available federal and state resources.



Workshop Descriptions: Friday

Room 201 Mid America Strawberry Growers Association

9:00 a.m. Marketing Materials

Lizzy Herrera, Program Manager, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

9:30 a.m. Spray Programs

Aaron Cato, Extension Specialist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

10:00 a.m. Tip Production / Plant Availability

Jim Goodson

11:15 a.m. Strawberry IPM Guide and Apps

Rebecca Melanson, Associate Extension Professor, Mississippi State University

Overview of the IPM guide and apps to assist growers.

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Strawberry Plug Production at McNitt Growers

Bill McNitt, McNitt Growers

After getting out of the US Air Force in 1994, McNitt came home and joined the family farm. In 1999, McNitt graduated from Southern Illinois University Carbondale with a bachelor's degree in plant and soil science. McNitt is the head grower at McNitt Growers. Since the mid 2000's, McNitt Growers has been producing strawberry plug plants for growers in multiple states.

3:15 p.m. Strawberry Disease Management

Phil Brannen, Professor and Extension Fruit Pathologist, University of Georgia

Basics of disease ID and disease management for plasticulture strawberry production.

4:00 p.m. Open Discussion



Workshop Descriptions: Friday

Room 203 Food Systems and Safety

9:00 a.m. Establishing a Produce Safety Culture for Any Size Produce Farm
Amanda Philyaw Perez, Extension Specialist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

Grow your food safety culture as you grow your farm.

10:00 a.m. Food Safety Plans for Farms and Manufacturers
Danielle Dozier, GSS Group

In this session, Danielle Dozier will discuss the bones of preparing a food safety plan, common questions, and where to find resources.

11:00 a.m. Introduction to Arkansas Produce Safety Program and Food Safety Modernization Act
Mark Stoll, Director, Regulatory Services Section, Arkansas Department of Agriculture
Greg Alexander, Produce Safety Program Manager, Arkansas Department of Agriculture
Tammy Winsor, Produce Safety Inspector, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

This session is an introduction to the Arkansas Produce Safety Program/Food Safety Modernization Act.

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Small Farm Fruit and Vegetable Washing
Sarah Bakker, Program Associate, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

This session is geared towards small-scale farmers, backyard gardeners, and anyone interested in improving their fruit and vegetable washing and handling practices. After attending, participants should have a better idea of why produce safety is important on smaller operations, have a better understanding of what are generally considered to be "best practices" when washing and packing produce, and will be shown a very basic and affordable wash/pack setup that even backyard gardeners can use to mitigate contamination risks in their final products.



Workshop Descriptions: Friday

Room 203 Food Systems and Safety

3:00 p.m. Review of Considerations and Costs of Value-Added Food Production from Surplus Produce

Renee Threlfall, Research Scientist, UA System Division of Agriculture
Andrea Myers, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

4:00 p.m. Best Practices for Keeping Microgreens Safe from Cultivation to Consumption

Kristen Gibson, Professor, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

Microgreens are the immature seedlings of edible herbs and vegetables. Compared to the mature plants they grow into, microgreens have a ton of nutrients in a tiny package. However, similar to other fresh produce commonly eaten raw, there are potential food safety risks if not cultivated, harvested, and handled using best practices. This presentation will discuss some of the risk factors related to the production and consumption of microgreens and best practices to mitigate these risks.

Room 205 General Farm Business

9:00 a.m. Arkansas Farm Bureau Support for Specialty Crop Farmers

John McMinn, Director, Commodity Activities & Economics, Arkansas Farm Bureau

10:00 a.m. Customers Over Marketing

Katherine Daniels, Business Consultant & Entrepreneur, KD Consulting

How to cultivate customer relations not marketing mayhem.

11:00 a.m. The Next California Project

Trey Malone, Assistant Professor, UA System Division of Agriculture

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO



Workshop Descriptions: Friday

Room 205

General Farm Business, cont.

2:00 p.m.

American Farmland Trust: Our Efforts to Protect Farmland, Promote Sound Farming Practices, and Keep Farmers on the Land

John Larson, Senior Vice President, American Farmland Trust

3:00 p.m.

Arkansas Apiary Laws and Bee Health

John Martin, Inspector, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Jacob Bates, Inspector, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

The presentation will cover Arkansas state apiary regulations and what to expect when inspectors come to your bee yard.



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 102 **Organic Farming**

9:15 a.m. Transition to Organic Partnership Project (TOPP) Resource Showcase

Welcome to the Arkansas Grown Organic Track. What's going on around the state? This resource showcase briefly highlights farmer support opportunities from many different organizations around the state.

Heather Friedrich, Assistant Director at the Center for Arkansas Farms and Food
Henry English, Director, Small Farm Program, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Karen Lee, Extension Program Specialist, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
Robyn Metzger, Program Specialist, National Center for Appropriate Technology
Kesha Cobb, USDA certified Urban Farmer, The Sustainability Project

10:10 A.M. Organic Pest Management Strategies that Work for Open Field Production

Ayanava Majumdar

Pest management is one of the most challenging aspects for organic growers in our region. Building from his research experience and time in extension, Dr. Ayanava Majumdar will discuss organic approved pest management practices that actually work.

11:00 a.m. Workshop: Finding Organic Pest Solutions That Work

Riley Arnold, Grower, Organic Crop Advisor and Teacher
Joe Hannan, Instructor, Center for Arkansas Farms and Food

This discussion-based session focuses on solving the biggest insect, disease, and weed challenges on your farm using organic control methods. Share your successes and challenges with your peers. Refine your knowledge, teach others, or learn something completely new.

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 102 **Organic Farming, cont.**

2:00 p.m. Nuts and Bolts of Organic Certification

Jeff Stearns, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture

Mark Cain, Dripping Springs

How do you actually get certified organic? Jeff Stearns, an experienced inspector from Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, will walk you through best practices for ensuring a smooth inspection. Joining him is Mark Cain of Drippings Springs, a long time certified organic specialty farmer, who will walk you through how he keeps his organic records and what he does to prepare for an inspection.

3:00 p.m. Organic Success Stories Panel

Shawn Peebles, Peebles Organic

Mark Cain, Dripping Springs Garden

Kyle Manning, Fat Rabbit Farms

Hear from three Arkansas farms who are successfully growing and selling certified organic or certified naturally grown specialty crops. Each panelist will discuss what they are growing, how they made the switch, and how they are addressing some of their biggest challenges.

4:15 p.m. World Café Needs Assessment

Heather Friedrich, Assistant Director at the Center for Arkansas Farms and Food

Riley Arnold, Grower, Organic Crop Advisor and Teacher

Joe Hannan, Instructor, Center for Arkansas Farms and Food



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 104 Floral and Garden

10:00 a.m. Gardening in the Natural State

Janet Carson, In the Garden: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Tips for gardening success, and how to avoid pitfalls while gardening in Arkansas.

11:00 a.m. Composting

Chris Wyman, in partnership with Dunbar Gardens

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Pollinator Friendly Gardens

Janet Carson, In the Garden: Arkansas Democrat Gazette

4:00 p.m. Arkansas Apiary Laws and Bee Health

John Martin, Inspector, Arkansas Department of Agriculture
Jacob Bates, Inspector, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

This session will cover Arkansas state apiary regulations and what we do when we come to your bee yard.



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 201 **Arkansas Pecan Growers Association (APGA)**

9:00 a.m. Welcome

John Bruhl, Vice President/Treasurer, Arkansas Pecan Growers Association
Jackie Lee, Director, Fruit Research Station, UA System Division of Agriculture

9:05 a.m. Pecan Varieties

Michael Polozola, Fruit and Nut Specialist, Louisiana State University

This presentation will cover pecan varieties that have a potential fit in Arkansas.

10:00 a.m. Tri-County Pecan Team are Boots on the Ground in Arkansas

Jacob Holloway, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension, Prairie County
Sherri Sanders, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension, White County
Kyle Sanders, UA System Division of Agriculture Extension, Lonoke County

This presentation will cover a multi county demonstration trial that provides education for pecan growers relating to integrated pest management techniques and monitoring.

10:30 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. Pecan Research Updates from the Noble Research Institute

Charlie Graham, Senior Pecan Specialist, Noble Research Institute

This presentation will cover pecan research projects conducted by research scientists from the Noble Research Institute.

11:30 p.m. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Program Updates for Pecans

Katy Brantley, State Urban Conservationist, USDA NRCS Arkansas

This presentation will address NRCS programs and services available to pecan growers.

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 201 **Arkansas Pecan Growers Association (APGA), cont.**

1:00 p.m. **Test Your Pecan Knowledge!**

Rebecca Melanson, Associate Extension Professor, Mississippi State University

Commercial pecan producers face numerous horticulture, disease, insect, and weed problems each year and must make informed decisions to properly manage these problems to produce a successful crop. Test your knowledge of these problems as well as your knowledge of pecans, in general, in this interactive presentation, and become better prepared to identify and handle problems that develop.

1:45 p.m. **Insect Management in Pecans**

Jackie Lee, Director, Fruit Research Station, UA System Division of Agriculture

This presentation will cover integrated approaches to insect management in pecans including how to monitor for pests and how to time pesticide applications.

2:30 p.m. **Break**

2:45 p.m. **Pecan Growers' Forum**

John Bruhl, Pecan Grower
Greg Rusher, Pecan Grower

Round table discussion of grower practices. This will include an overview of production at the Rusher Farm and Bruhl Farm. The speakers will entertain questions and have open discussion on any topic fellow growers would like to address.

3:15 p.m. **Arkansas Pecan Growers Association Business Meeting**

Jackie Lee, President, Arkansas Pecan Growers Association
John Bruhl, Vice President/Treasurer, Arkansas Pecan Growers Association
Greg Rusher, Secretary, Arkansas Pecan Growers Association

This session is a short business meeting to discuss items related to the Arkansas Pecan Growers Association.



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 203 Tree Fruits

9:00 a.m. What are you thinking? Considerations for New Orchards

Curt Tom, Professor, UA System Division of Agriculture

Factors to consider when planting a new apple, peach, or other tree fruit orchard in Arkansas.

10:00 a.m. Building a Spray Program for Peaches in Arkansas

Aaron Cato, Extension Specialist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

11:00 a.m. Orchard Floor Weed Management

Hannah Wright-Smith, Weed Specialist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Roundtable Discussion

Room 205 General Farm Business

9:00 a.m. Coffee Talk: Farmer Health

Rachel Hale, MA, Instructor, College of Public Health, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS)

Kelly Dundon, LMSW, Licensed Psychotherapist, Chenal Family Therapy Consultant, Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Come enjoy a cup of coffee and a conversation about farmer health in Arkansas.

10:00 a.m. Selecting the Right High Tunnel – Preparation, Installation, and Management

Sean Pessarar, The Mindful Farmer

This session will dive into the topic of high tunnels and greenhouses, specifically how to select the style that works best for your enterprise and best practices regarding site preparation, installation, and management.



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 205 **General Farm Business, cont.**

11:00 a.m. Beginning Farmer Program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
Karen Lee, Extension Program Specialist, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Are you interested in farming, but do not know where to start? Do you have a small farm and want to know more about improving your operation? Learn more about the opportunities for beginning and small farming operations.

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Efficiency with Equipment
Fred Ibbotson, River Valley Tractor

3:00 p.m. Vertical Farming
Luigi Campos, Vice President, 180 Pipe
Arturo Quintero Ferrer, Assistant Professor, University of Arkansas Monticello

Room 207 **Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association (ABGA)**

9:00 a.m. Association Member Meeting

9:30 a.m. Basics of Blackberry Production
Amanda McWhirt, Extension Specialist, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

10:00 a.m. Variety Recommendations and New Releases
Carmen Johns, Assistant Fruit Breeder, UA System Division of Agriculture
Q & A begins at 10:30 a.m

Updates from the University of Arkansas Blackberry Breeding Program

11:00 a.m. Overview of Blackberry Diseases
Johnathan Oliver, Plant Pathology, University of Georgia

Overview of diseases common in the Southeast on blackberry and their management.



12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 207 Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association (ABGA), cont.

2:00 p.m. Farm Profile

Andre "Farmer Dre" Gradinariu, Gardeners Orchard and Bakery

"Farmer Dre" is a member of the Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association and a YouTube star. Join us to see behind the scenes of his family farm, Gardeners Orchard and Bakery, located in Southwest Missouri. Andre is the production manager at Gardener's Orchard and has become the online face of the family farm. He documents farm operations and activities on social media and YouTube.

3:00 p.m. Marketing and Agritourism for Berries

Dennis McGarrah, Jr., Rivercrest Orchard

Dennis McGarrah Jr. "Buddy" and his wife run Rivercrest Orchard, an agritourism operation in Fayetteville, Arkansas. They have developed various markets for their strawberries and blackberries. Dennis will share insights from their farm on marketing and agritourism.

4:00 p.m. Recap and Reminders for 2024 Season

Room 208 Arkansas Farmers Market Association (AFMA)

9:00 a.m. Introduction

Katrina Betancourt, Arkansas Center for Obesity Prevention (ArCOP) President

This session will introduce the ArCOP organization and share how the Arkansas Farmers Market Association can help the community, markets, managers, farmers, and vendors.

9:10 a.m. Ready. Start. Grow! Resources for your Small Business

Angela Gardner, Arkansas Small Business & Technology Development Center

Launch and grow your business with confidence through the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center. In this seminar, you'll learn about our in-house resources, technical assistance services, and local programs



available to support entrepreneurs in the state. Position yourself for success in 2024.

Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 208

Arkansas Farmers Market Association (AFMA), cont.

9:30 a.m.

Food Freedom in Farmers Markets

Jeff Jackson, Arkansas Department of Health

This session will provide a brief history of home-based food production in Arkansas, the foods that are allowed to be sold, foods that are still prohibited, minimum labeling requirements, how these products can be marketed, and food safety considerations when operating a home-based food business.

10:00 a.m.

Promoting Your Market

Steve Powell, Arkansas Center for Obesity Prevention (ArCOP)

10:15 a.m.

Market Growth, How to Cultivate A Stronger Customer Base

Katherine Daniels, Business Consultant & Entrepreneur, KD Consulting

Customers = Cash. Learn key areas to focus on to cultivate and connect with more customers.

11:00 p.m.

Increasing Food Access by Accepting SNAP/EBT at your Farm or Farmers Market with MarketLink

Lisa Roach, Regional Representative, MarketLink

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - an income-based federal nutrition benefit program, is one of the largest and most successful food assistance programs that many farmers and farmers markets qualify to accept. Facilitated by one of our SNAP/EBT specialists, this presentation will introduce direct marketing farmers and farmers markets to the MarketLink grant program and cover the basic steps of becoming a SNAP Authorized Retailer, cover what is provided through the MarketLink grant for eligible farmers and farmers markets, including: free point-of-sale (POS) equipment, one-year free TotilPay Go subscription with the possibility of additional year(s) extension, and technical assistance, and provide a brief overview of additional MarketLink projects, including SNAP Online and eWIC/FMNP/incentives.



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 208 **Arkansas Farmers Market Association (AFMA), cont.**

11:30 p.m. **Modern Online Farmers Market Management**

Adam Stokes, Marketspread

Presentation covering this platform and tools for managing every aspect of a farmers market from booking to receiving payments.

12:00 p.m. **LUNCH & EXPO**

2:00 P.M. **Updates from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture**

Arkansas Grown and Arkansas Made Team, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

2:15 p.m. **Farmers Market Panel**

Jeff Quick, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas / Mt. Home Farmers Market

Jeremy Adams, Arkansas Center for Obesity Prevention (ArCOP)

Kayla Lindsey, Fayetteville Farmers Market

Tedra Duck, Hot Springs Farmers Market

There will be a short overview of the Double Up Food Bucks Program and the impact it has made at farmers markets in Arkansas.

3:45 p.m. **American Farmland Trust**

John Larson, Senior Vice President, American Farmland Trust



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 209 Food Systems and Safety

9:00 a.m. Little Rock Growers: A Community of Food Producers Supporting Community Change

Jimmy Parks, Anna Sawyer, Lauren Anderson, Dena Patterson, Ray Partridge
Urban Patchwork

10:00 a.m. The Building an Arkansas Agricultural Network Development (BAAND) Project: Let's BAAND Together, a facilitated session to identify what you need to be a community food producer

Amanda Philyaw Perez, Associate Professor, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension
Hunter Goodman, Assistant Professor, UA System Division of Agriculture, Extension

11:00 a.m. Top Three Sales Strategies for Wholesale

Kim Bryden, CEO & Founder, Cureate

Cureate CEO & Founder, Kim Bryden, shares best practices for landing and maintaining wholesale accounts in retail and foodservice. This session will be a discussion with active Q&A. If you run a farm or value-added product business and are excited to learn more about sales, this session is for you.

12:00 p.m. LUNCH & EXPO

2:00 p.m. Understanding Living Soils

Adam Chartrand, Man of the Red Earth

This session is a 30-minute lecture on living soil and the soil food web, with a 15-minute Q&A following

3:00 p.m. Homesteading in Arkansas

Britt Talent, Organizer, Arkansas Homesteading Conference

This session is an overview of the homesteading movement in Arkansas.



Workshop Descriptions: Saturday

Room 209 Food Systems and Safety, cont.

4:00 p.m. What to Expect During a Produce Safety Inspection, Arkansas Produce Safety Program

Mark Stoll, Director, Regulatory Services Section, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Greg Alexander, Produce Safety Program Manager, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Lowell French, Produce Safety Inspector, Arkansas Department of Agriculture