

Arkansas GROWN™

CONFERENCE & EXPO

Collaboration is the Key to Success!

JANUARY 30 – FEBRUARY 1, 2025
HOT SPRINGS CONVENTION CENTER





January 30 – February 1, 2025 | Hot Springs Convention Center

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s Arkansas Grown program, in partnership with Arkansas agriculture associations and organizations, welcomes you to the third Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo! The Conference is open to all individuals and organizations interested in the state’s largest industry, agriculture, and focuses on education for farmers and producers who grow for our local food system. In addition to the sessions, workshops, and agriculture expo, the conference will conclude with the Arkansas Grown & Arkansas Made Market.

The Arkansas Grown & Arkansas Made Market will be open to the public, providing the opportunity to sell directly to attendees and consumers. The Market is one of the state’s largest indoor farmer markets filled with hand-made or small-batch goods created by Arkansas producers, makers, and artisans.

We want to thank the committee members, vendors, and sponsors who have supported and been instrumental in the success of the conference.

We encourage you to use this time to glean from this educational experience, network, connect, and gather valuable information to carry back to your farm.

Let your community know about this year’s Conference & Expo experience by using #2025ArkansasGrownConference and tagging @arkansasgrownandmade. One lucky attendee that shares will receive their 2026 Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo registration for FREE!!



DIAMOND SPONSORS



FARM CREDIT
ASSOCIATIONS OF ARKANSAS

Partnering Associations



Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo Schedule at a Glance

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025

- 8:00 am – 4:00 pm Registered Vendors and Attendees Check-In, *Hall A Concourse*
- 8:00 am – 4:00 pm Vendor Setup, Hot Springs Convention Center, *Halls A and B*
- 11:00 am – 1:00 pm Welcome, Keynote, and Lunch, *Hall C*
- 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Thursday Afternoon Educational Sessions

Blueberry – 201/202	Grape & Wine Production – 203/204	Agritourism – 207	Vegetable – 208/209
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5:30 pm Expo Opens: Happy Hour and Reception with Vendors and Sponsors, *Halls A and B*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025

- 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Expo Open, *Halls A and B*
- 8:00 am – 9:30 am Morning Refreshments, *Halls A and B*
- 9:00 am – 11:00 am Friday Morning Educational Sessions

Farmers Market 201/202	Farm-to-School 203/204	Arkansas Department of Agriculture 205	Strawberry 207	Vegetable 208/209
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- 11:00 am – 12:00 pm Friday Keynote Hosted by Arkansas Agritourism Association, *Hall C*
- 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch with Vendors, *Halls A and B*
- 1:30 pm – 5:00 pm Friday Afternoon Educational Sessions

Farmers Market 201/202	Farm-to-School 203/204	Arkansas Department of Agriculture 205	Strawberry 207	Vegetable 208/209
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- 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm Afternoon Refreshments, *Halls A and B*
- 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm Taste of Arkansas Networking Reception – Hosted by Farm to School
- 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Hospitality Suite at Hotel Hot Springs – Hosted by Arkansas Agritourism Association

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2025

- 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Expo Open, *Halls A and B*
- 8:00 am – 9:30 am Morning Refreshments, *Halls A and B*
- 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Arkansas Grown & Arkansas Made Market Open, *Hall B*
- 8:00 am – 11:00 am Saturday Morning Educational Sessions

Pecans – 201/202	Emerging Crops – 203/204	Blackberry – 207	Organic – 208/209
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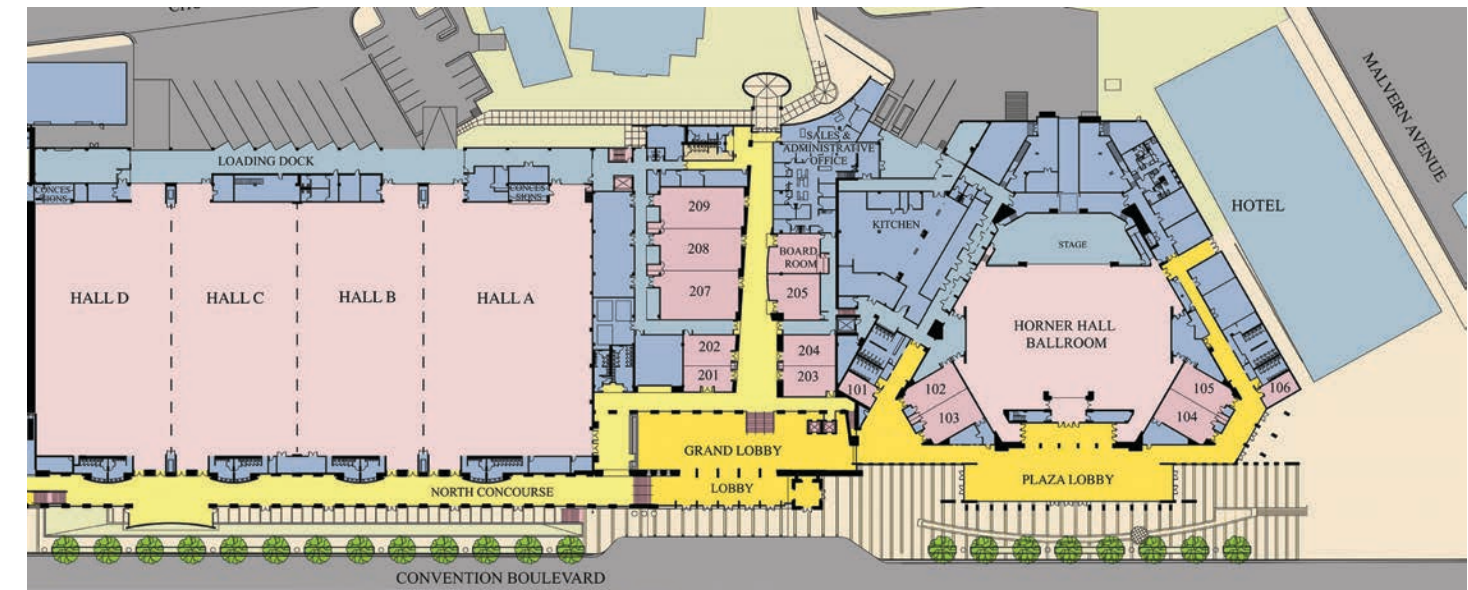
- 11:00 am – 12:00 pm Saturday Keynote Hosted by Arkansas Agritourism Association, *Hall C*
- 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch with Vendors, *Halls A and B*
- 1:15 pm – 5:00 pm Saturday Afternoon Educational Sessions

Pecans – 201/202	Emerging Crops – 203/204	Blackberry – 207	Organic – 208/209
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2:30 pm – 4:00 pm Afternoon Refreshments, *Halls A and B*



Hot Spring Convention Center Map



Online Agenda



Wi-Fi: Hot Springs Wi-Fi, Password - spacity2025

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025

BLUEBERRY SESSION

Hosted by Arkansas Blueberry Growers Association

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Rooms 201/202

- 1:30 pm** Blueberry Plant Establishment, Ryan Neal, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension
- 2:00 pm** Experience Growing Blueberry in Pots, Cailin Irby, UADA Center for Arkansas Farm and Foods
- 2:30 pm** Weed Control, Hannah Wright Smith, UADA Extension
- 3:00 pm** 2024 Blueberry Variety Trial Results, Keilah Barney, UADA Extension
- 3:30 pm** Career Retrospective: How to be Successful with Blueberries, Patrick Byers, University of Missouri Extension (retired)
- 4:30 pm** Grower Profile: Blaine Burgess, Wye Mountain Berries

GRAPE AND WINE PRODUCTION SESSION

Hosted by Arkansas Association of Grape Growers

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Rooms 203/204

- 1:30 pm** Introductions and Arkansas Association of Grape Growers Annual Meeting
- 2:00 pm** Potential for Fresh-market Muscadine Production in Arkansas, Matt Wilson, Ritter Ag
- 2:30 pm** Winter Hardiness for Muscadine Grapevines Grown in Arkansas, Amanda McWhirt, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension
- 3:00 pm** **BREAK**
- 3:15 pm** Potential for High Tunnels in Grape Production and Funding/Training Opportunities, Taunya Ernst, UADA Extension
- 3:45 pm** Weed Management in Grape Vineyards, Hannah Wright Smith, UADA Extension
- 4:15 pm** Winery and Vineyard Highway Signage Process, David Weston, Arkansas Department of Transportation
- 4:45 pm** Update on *Vitis x Muscadinia* Research and Extension Project, Renee Threlfall, UADA Food Science Department

11:00 am – 1:00 pm **Welcome, Keynote, and Lunch, Hall C**

- Introductions to the Arkansas Department of Agriculture
- Introductions to Agriculture Associations represented in Educational Sessions
- Marketing Strategically: Opportunities and Challenges, Ron Rainey, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension

5:00 pm

Expo Opens: Happy Hour and Reception with Vendors and Sponsors, Halls A and B

- Mingle and enjoy food, music, and beverages.

AGRITOURISM SESSION

Hosted by Arkansas Agritourism Association

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Room 207

- 1:00 pm** Intro to Agritourism: History, Future, and Trends Nationally and Globally, Lisa Chase, The University of Vermont, Extension Professor
- 1:45 pm** The Challenges and Solutions Panel to Smooth the Road Ahead – Panel Discussion:
- Liability Considerations – Overview of the Agritourism Law, What it Covers and the Operators Responsibilities, Rusty Rumley, National Ag Law Center
 - Safety – Farm and Food-Resources at your Reach, Stacey McCullough and Amanda Philyaw Perez, University System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension and Renee Smith, Arkansas Hospitality Association
 - Marketing with Tourism – Susie Cowan, Arkansas Tourism
 - Business Planning – Stacey McCullough, UADA Extension
 - New Opportunities in Agritourism – Farm to Table, Arts and Heritage, Bird Watching and Beyond, Ruthie Pepler, Dogwood Hills Guest Farm
- 3:00 pm** Panel Breakout Sessions
- 4:30 pm** Arkansas Agritourism Association Annual Meeting

VEGETABLE SESSION

Hosted by Arkansas State Horticulture Society

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Rooms 208/209

- 1:30 pm** Using Integrated Pest Management to Make Money Growing Squash, Pumpkins, and Melons, Aaron Cato, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension
- 2:30 pm** Arkansas Seedless Watermelon and Cantaloupe Variety Trials, Matt Bertucci, UADA Extension
- 3:00 pm** How to Minimize Pest Losses in Tomato, Aaron Cato, UADA Extension
- 4:00 pm** Post-harvest Handling of Vegetables, Amanda Philyaw Perez, UADA Extension
- 4:30 pm** Carrot BBQ Sauce – Developing Niche Products with Arkansas Grown Vegetables, Andrea Myers and Renee Threlfall, UADA Extension



FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025

FARMERS MARKET SESSION

Hosted by Arkansas Farmers Market Association

9:00 am – 10:45 am
Meeting Rooms 201/202

- 9:00 am** Arkansas Department of Health Food Freedom and Farmers Market Regulations, Jeff Jackson, Arkansas Department of Health
- 9:30 am** Arkansas Farmers Market Association (AFMA) attendees encouraged to attend United States Department of Agriculture Local Foods Program Panel, Room 205
- 10:30 am** Home-Based Value-Added Product Development, David Hill, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Rooms 201/202

- 1:30 pm** AFMA Overview and Double Up Food Bucks
- 2:00 pm** Farmers Market Presentation, Shelly Smith, Rogers
- 2:30 pm** Farmers Market Presentation, Pauline Rescorl, Eureka Springs
- 3:00 pm** Farmers Market Presentation, Jeff Quick, Mountain Home
- 3:30 pm** Farmers Market Presentation, Katy Elliot, Arkansas Local Food Network
- 4:00 pm** Open Discussion

FARM TO SCHOOL SESSION

Hosted by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture

9:00 am – 10:45 am
Meeting Rooms 203/204

- 9:00 am** Welcome, Jessica Chapman, Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Sheila Chastain, Arkansas Department of Education
- 9:15 am** Purchasing Local through School Nutrition Programs, Eddie Longoria and Melissa Campbell, United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services
- 10:00 am** From Soil to School: A Producer's Path to the Cafeteria, Randy Arnold, Strawberry Growers Association

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Meeting Rooms 203/204

- 1:30 pm** Local Food Prep in the School Kitchen, Courtney Erick, Arkansas Department of Education and Ally Mrachek, LunchAssist
- 3:00 pm** Interactive Panel: Overcoming Barriers in Farm to School Procurement
- Produce Producer – Ekko Barnhill, Barnhill Orchards
 - Protein Producer – John Wahrmund, Wahrmund Farms
 - Procurement Expert – Ally Mrachek, LunchAssist
 - Marketing Expert – Kat Daniels, Arkansas Brand Developer

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Room Hall C

- 4:00 pm** Scratch Cooking: Making an Impact Beyond the Lunch Tray, Chef Jennifer Maune, CC, CPC
- 5:00 pm** Taste of Arkansas Networking Reception

8:00 am – 9:30 am Morning Refreshments, Halls A and B

8:00 am – 5:00 pm Expo Open, Halls A and B

11:00 am **Working Together to Embrace the Natural State, Hall C**
Hosted by Arkansas Agritourism Association

- Keynote provided by Lisa Chase, The University of Vermont, Extension Professor: Natural Resources Specialist and Director of the Vermont Tourism Research Center.

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch with Vendors, Halls A and B

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm Afternoon Refreshments, Halls A and B

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm **Taste of Arkansas Networking Reception, Hall C**
Hosted by Farm to School

- Are you a producer wanting to sell to schools? Then this networking event is for you. Join Child Nutrition Directors to discuss bringing local food to school cafeterias!

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm – **Hospitality Suite at Hotel Hot Springs**
Hosted by Arkansas Agritourism Association

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SESSION

Hosted by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture

9:00 am – 10:45 am
Meeting Room 205

- 9:00 am** Regenerative Agriculture, Robin Ralston, Ralston Farms
- 9:30 am** United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Local Foods Program Panel – Amy Lyman, Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Angela Gardner, USDA Agriculture Marketing Service, Brenda Williams, Communities Unlimited, Amanda Philyaw Perez, University of Arkansas System (UADA) Extension
- 10:30 am** Local Food Supply Chain Development – Market and Grower Panel – Liz Bell, WSBZ Farms, Loretta Cochran, Farindale Farms, Mary Admire, The Front Porch Market, and Dr. Darryl Holliday, Arkansas Food Innovation Center at the Market Center of the Ozarks

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Room 205

- 1:30 pm** Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) – Feral Hog Grant, Tax Credit Program, Alice Weeks, AACD
- 2:00 pm** Introduction to Produce Safety Audits and Inspections, Amanda Philyaw Perez, UADA Extension
- 2:30 pm** New Preharvest Ag Water Rule Requirements, Amanda Philyaw Perez, UADA Extension
- 3:00 pm** Keeping it in the Family (KIITF) Forestry Program, Kandi Williams, KIITF Outreach Coordinator, University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
- 3:15 pm** Understanding Heirs' Property, Amy Pritchard, Attorney, Pritchard Law Firm
- 3:30 pm** Marketing and Business Planning, Cory Babb of Firelight Farm and Kyle Manning of Fat Rabbit Farm
- 4:00 pm** From Soil to Sustainability: Actively Merging S.T.E.M. and Agriculture Education to Build Financial Futures and Cultivate Community Resilience, Coach A, Zeps Garden
- 4:30 pm** Arkansas Apiary Laws and Bee Health, Jacob Bates and John Martin, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025

STRAWBERRY SESSION

Hosted by Mid-America Strawberry Growers Association

9:00 am – 10:45 am
Meeting Room 207

- 9:00 am** Welcome to Mid-America Strawberry Growers Association (MASGA)/ Beginners Session
9:45 am My IPM App and the Insect and Disease Photo Guide, Rebecca Melanson, Mississippi State University Extension
10:15 am Botrytis and Anthracnose Resistance Testing, Rebecca Melanson, Mississippi State University Extension

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Room 207

- 1:30 pm** Plant Future, Jim Goodson
2:00 pm Strawberry Soil Test Lime and Fertility, David Dycus, FCI North Carolina
2:45 pm Strawberry Fertility Trial Updates, Amanda McWhirt, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension
3:00 pm Disease Spray Program and Drone Spraying, Aaron Cato, UADA Extension
3:45 pm Neo Pest Disease Update, David Dycus, FCI North Carolina
4:30 pm Open Discussion followed by MASGA Business Meeting

VEGETABLE SESSION

Hosted by Arkansas State Horticulture Society

9:00 am – 10:45 am
Meeting Rooms 208/209

- 9:00 am** MyIPM Vegetable App and other Disease Management Resources, Rebecca Melanson, Mississippi State Extension
10:00 am Identifying Weeds and Integrated Weed Management, Hannah Wright Smith, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension
10:30 am Grower Resource Panel: Conservation Districts, Foreign Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Rural Development, and Southern Risk Management

8:00 am – 9:30 am Morning Refreshments, Halls A and B

11:00 am Working Together to Embrace the Natural State, Hall C
Hosted by Arkansas Agritourism Association

- Keynote provided by Lisa Chase, The University of Vermont, Extension Professor: Natural Resources Specialist and Director of the Vermont Tourism Research Center.

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch with Vendors, Halls A and B

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm Afternoon Refreshments, Halls A and B

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm Taste of Arkansas Networking Reception, Hall C – Hosted by Farm to School

- Are you a producer wanting to sell to schools? Then this networking event is for you. Join Child Nutrition Directors to discuss bringing local food to school cafeterias!

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Hospitality Suite at Hotel Hot Springs
Hosted by Arkansas Agritourism Association

VEGETABLE SESSION (continued)

Hosted by Arkansas State Horticulture Society

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Rooms 208/209

- 1:30 pm** Introduction to High Tunnel Production, Taunya Ernst, UADA Extension
2:30 pm Incorporating a High Tunnel onto your Farm, Terry Kirkpatrick, Experienced High Tunnel Grower
3:00 pm Winter High Tunnel Production, Taunya Ernst and Aaron Cato, UADA Extension
3:45 pm The High Tunnel Environmental Quality Incentives Program, A Grower's Experience, Sarah Shelton-James, New High Tunnel Grower
4:30 pm High Tunnel Design Considerations, Taunya Ernst, UADA Extension



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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2025

PECAN SESSION

Hosted by Arkansas Pecan Growers Association

9:00 am – 10:45 am
Meeting Rooms 201/202

9:00 am Optic Sorting for Pecan Quality, John Bruhl, Bruhl Farms
9:30 am Pecan Market and Ask Charlie!, Dr. Charlie Graham, Noble Research Institute
10:00 am Pecan Crop Load Management, Becky Carrol, Oklahoma State University

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Rooms 201/202

1:30 pm Update on Tri-County Pecan Programs, Sherri and Kyle Sanders, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension
2:30 pm Pecan Tissue Sampling and Nutrient Analysis, Amanda McWhirt, UADA Extension
3:00 pm Growers Forum, Greg Rusher, Jacob Feather, Phil Ward, John Bruhl, and Anna Jeter
4:00 pm Arkansas Pecan Growers Association Annual Meeting

EMERGING CROPS SESSION

Hosted by Arkansas State Horticulture Society

8:00 am – 10:45 am
Meeting Rooms 203/204

8:00 am Arkansas State Horticulture Society Annual Meeting
9:00 am Growing Cut Flowers on your Farm, Anthony Bowden, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension
10:00 am The Return of a Superfood, the Ozark Chinquapin Tree, Chris Wyatt and Steve Bost, The Ozark Chinquapin Foundation

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Rooms 203/204

1:30 pm Growing Elderberries, Patrick Byers, University of Missouri Extension (retired)
2:30 pm University of Arkansas Pine Bluff (UAPB) New and Beginning Farmer Program, Dr. Henry English, Director, UAPB Small Farm Program
2:45 pm Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project/2501 Program, Karen Lee, UAPB Program Specialist
3:00 pm Spots, Oozes, and Rots: A Brief Overview of Apple Disease Management Challenges in the Southeast, Sara Villani, North Carolina State University
4:00 pm How to Safely and Successfully Produce Elderberry Products, Sun Ferreira, UADA Extension
4:30 pm Exploring Hydroponics: Commercial and Home, Derek Reed, UADA Extension

8:00 am – 5:00 pm Expo Open, Halls A and B

8:00 am – 5:00 pm Arkansas Grown and Arkansas Made Market, Hall B

8:00 am – 9:30 am Morning Refreshments, Halls A and B

11:00 am **The Faces of Arkansas Agriculture, Hall C**
Hosted by Arkansas Agritourism Association

- Keynote provided by Lisa Chase, The University of Vermont, Extension Professor: Natural Resources Specialist and Director of the Vermont Tourism Research Center.

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch with Vendors, Halls A and B

2:30 - 4:00 pm Afternoon Refreshments, Halls A and B

BLACKBERRY SESSION

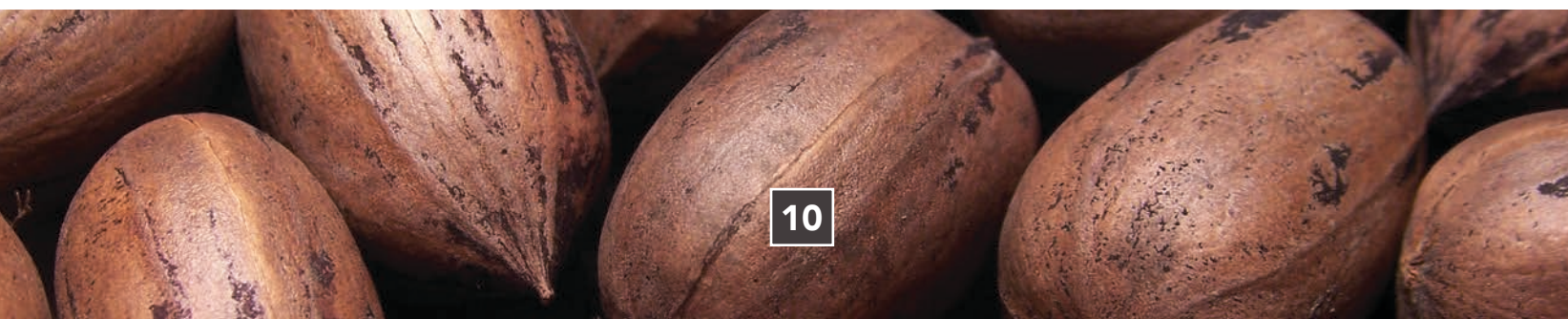
Hosted by Arkansas Blackberry Association

9:00 am – 10:45 am
Meeting Rooms 207

9:00 am Start-up Costs and Basics of Establishment, Ryan Neal, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension
9:30 am Grower Experience with Establishment on Rotating Cross-Arm, Chris Linam, Linam Family Farms
10:00 am Tips for Beginning Blackberry Growers, Patrick Byers, University of Missouri Extension (retired)

1:15 pm – 5:00 pm
Meeting Rooms 207

1:15 pm Arkansas Blackberry Association Business Meeting
1:30 pm Caneberry Disease Management including Fusarium and Spur Blight, Sara Villani, North Carolina State University
2:20 pm Blackberry Variety Recommendations, Jackie Lee, UADA Fruit Research Station Director
3:00 pm Value Added Considerations and Rules, Sun Ferreira, UADA Extension
3:30 pm Updated Recommendations on Fertility Management, Amanda McWhirt, UADA Extension
4:00 pm Insect Control in Blackberry, Aaron Cato, UADA Extension
4:30 pm General Q&A from Audience



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2025

8:00 am – 5:00 pm Expo Open, Halls A and B

8:00 am – 5:00 pm Arkansas Grown and Arkansas Made Market, Hall B

8:00 am – 9:30 am Morning Refreshments, Halls A and B

11:15 am **The Faces of Arkansas Agriculture, Hall C**
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12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch with Vendors, Halls A and B

2:30 - 4:30 pm Afternoon Refreshments, Halls A and B

ORGANIC SESSION

Hosted by the Center for Arkansas Farms and Food (CAFF)

9:00 am – 10:45 am
 Meeting Rooms 208/209

9:00 am Thinking About Getting Certified? Where to Start – Joe Hannan, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Center for Arkansas Farms and Food (UADA CAFF), Brendan Sinclair and Liesel McCleary, Snuggle Bug Farm

10:00 am Weed Management the Organic Way, Mike Appel and Emily Oakley, Three Springs Farm, Brendan Sinclair and Liesel McCleary, Snuggle Bug Farm

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
 Meeting Rooms 208/209

1:30 pm Putting Cover Crops to Work, Amanda McWhirt, UADA Extension, Mike Appel and Emily Oakley, Three Springs Farm

3:00 pm Talking Shop: Successes, Challenges, Vendors, and Varieties – Farmer discussion facilitated by Heather Friedrich, UADA CAFF

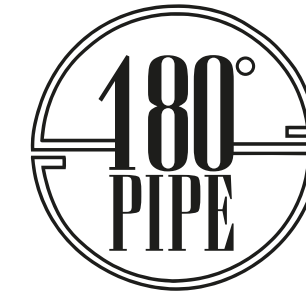
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