

Arkansas Agriculture Department to Sponsor Exhibit at Produce Marketing Association's Fresh Summit 2011.

Arkansas Agriculture Department • #1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205
Phone: 501-683-4851

The Arkansas Agriculture Department will sponsor an "Arkansas Grown" exhibit promoting the state's specialty crops at the Produce Marketing Association's 2011 Fresh Summit International Convention and Exposition being held in Atlanta, Georgia during October 14-17.

This will be Arkansas's fourth year to participate in the Fresh Summit. Four Arkansas companies are participating in the exhibit: Randy Clanton Farms of Hermitage; Mathews Ridgeview Farms of Wynne; Old Dominion Produce of Manila; and Post Familie Vineyards & Winery of Altus. In addition to the four companies, representatives of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and the East Arkansas Enterprise Community will also attend.

Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Bell said "A principal goal of the Arkansas exhibit is to illustrate to buyers that our state has facilities providing exceptional customer service. All four participating companies have modern, excellent packing and shipping facilities. We also want to show the variety of crops we offer."

Among crops offered by the four Arkansas companies are sweet potatoes, tomatoes, greens, squash, peppers, asparagus, cucumbers, watermelons, blueberries, blackberries and grapes.

Bell said, "Specialty crops enable Arkansas farms with smaller acreages to produce competitive crops whereas it is difficult for them to be competitive when growing the state's main row crops of rice, cotton and soybeans."

The Arkansas exhibit is being manned by Zachary Taylor, director of marketing for the Arkansas Agriculture Department, Cynthia Edwards, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, and David Fort of the Arkansas State Plant Board, along with representatives from the four companies, UAPB, and EAEC.

Funding for the exhibit was made possible by the United States Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

Attendance at the Exhibition is expected to exceed 18,500 from 50 countries, including over 800 exhibitors and more than 3,000 buyers.

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Questions regarding this press release may be directed to Zachary Taylor, Director of Marketing, at 501-219-6324 or email Zachary.Taylor@aad.ar.gov.