

ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT



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Arkansas is One of Four States Selected to Participate in Specialty Crop Multi-State Program

*Made possible by USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Funds;
Projects also funded in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington*

Little Rock, Arkansas - Arkansas is receiving \$755,784 from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) for a multi-state project to evaluate and develop field resistance to downy mildew in spinach. This project is a partnership between the Arkansas Agriculture Department (AAD), the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, and the USDA Agricultural Research Station in Salinas, California.

Arkansas is one of four states selected by AMS to participate in the Specialty Crop Multi-State Program. All projects address needs shared by multiple states affecting the specialty crop industry. The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture has an internationally recognized spinach research and breeding program, making Arkansas a natural choice for this research project.

"I am excited to begin this research project, which will benefit the spinach industry and private spinach breeders," said Dr. Ainong Shi, Project Director. "The goal of this project is to ultimately lower costs for consumers and increase profitability for spinach producers in Arkansas, California, Arizona, and other states," he said.

"Arkansas is pleased to be one of four states selected to participate in this program. Partnerships between states help us grow the specialty crop sector and support the development of new opportunities for farmers in Arkansas and across the U.S., said Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.

The U.S. is the second largest producer of spinach after China, valued at \$300 million annually. In addition to its economic importance, spinach is one of the healthiest vegetables in the human diet due to its high concentration of nutrients and health-promoting compounds.

The AAD is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation.

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The Arkansas Agriculture Department offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.