

If you're having trouble viewing this email, you may [see it online](#).

Share This: 

ARKANSAS Governor Mike Beebe



March 28, 2014

CONTACT: Matt DeCample

PHONE: 501-683-6414

matt.decample@governor.arkansas.gov

GOVERNOR BEEBE'S WEEKLY COLUMN AND RADIO ADDRESS: ARKANSAS GROWN

LITTLE ROCK - Governor Beebe's weekly radio address can be found online in MP3 format and downloadable for radio use at [this page](#).

To download the file directly, [click here](#).

Over the years, consumers have become increasingly health-conscious, as well as environmentally aware of farming practices. One of the results of this has been a monumental rise in demand for locally grown foods. In Arkansas alone, the number of farmers markets has nearly tripled in just the past decade.

This desire for nutritious food that is fresh from the farm has presented a huge opportunity for Arkansas farmers. In 2006 the Arkansas Agriculture Department launched the Arkansas Grown program to help farmers capitalize on that opportunity. Now the program itself has grown to help individuals, restaurants, schools and grocery stores locate Arkansas producers.

With approval from the Ag Department, any agricultural product grown or made in the State can now carry the trademarked "Arkansas Grown" label. This helps these products stand out at major retailers like Walmart, which in 2008 made a commitment to stock more locally grown foods.

The Arkansas Grown program also connects consumers to local producers on its Web site, arkansasgrown.org. Consumers can search to find the farmers markets, wholesalers and u-pick fields nearest to them. For a small annual fee, farmers can get additional promotional assistance from the program. This can be a critical resource, as small growers often lack the resources or experience to effectively market their goods. By helping them increase their visibility, the Arkansas Grown program gives our farmers a hand up to

compete in their native market.

Many states run comparable programs that are also successful. Few states, however, have such a diversity of crops as Arkansas does. Did you know, for instance, that Arkansas is the only state that produces edamame? Started just a few years ago in West Arkansas, our edamame trade is seeing rapid growth and high demand. Our State is also one of only a handful that qualifies as a primary peanut-producing state. This is in addition to the many fruits and vegetables, cheeses, wine and other foods grown right here within our borders.

Arkansas's variety of crops is also matched by the quality of those foods. Subway restaurants use Arkansas-grown tomatoes and bell peppers on its sandwiches in our state and nearby states during certain times of the year. This is the only area in the nation for which Subway has such a program.

By looking for the Arkansas Grown label in grocery stores, consumers can be sure they are buying the freshest farm foods that are grown nearby. Many of our children eat these same fresh and nutritious foods, thanks to a farm-to-school component of the program that continues to develop under the Arkansas Grown umbrella. And thanks to a partnership with gardening expert P. Allen Smith, the Arkansas Grown program continues to broaden the market for Arkansas farmers.

Agriculture has long been Arkansas's largest industry and a foundation of our economy. This recent trend back to buying locally grown foods can greatly benefit Arkansas family farmers moving forward. Eating local foods is better for you, better for the environment and often, it just tastes better, too.

###

Governor's Office | State Capitol Rm 250 | Little Rock, Arkansas 72201



This email was sent to butch.calhoun@aad.ar.gov. To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

[manage](#) your preferences | [opt out](#) using TrueRemove®.

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

email marketing by [Information Network of Arkansas](#)

powered by **emma**