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**Arkansas Grown School Garden Contest of the Year Open to Entries through September 9  
by Arkansas Agriculture Department and Farm Credit**

Little Rock, Ark. – Entries are being accepted for the third annual Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest sponsored by the Arkansas Agriculture Department and Farm Credit. Applicants can be any Arkansas school grades pre-K through 12 that had a school garden open during the 2015-2016 school year. Entries will be judged by an agricultural committee amid categories below. Entries will be required to provide documentation through photos or video of garden activities and progress. Entry forms are available at [www.aad.arkansas.gov](http://www.aad.arkansas.gov).

Farm Credit is generously providing funding for winners in the following award categories:

- Best Nutrition Education Based Garden - \$500
- Best Community Collaboration Garden - \$500
- Best Environmental Education Focused Garden - \$500
- Overall Winning Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year - \$1,500

“School gardens are an excellent way to create a lasting impression on students about the process from food growth and cultivation to food consumption. The AAD appreciates Farm Credit’s partnership in making the financial awards possible, as well as the many Arkansas educators that place priority with hands-on learning and agricultural initiatives,” says Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.

“As a farmer-owned cooperative, we are excited to continue our support of teachers and projects that engage Arkansas students in food production and agricultural sustainability. Through these partnerships, we can ensure that the valuable role of Arkansas agriculture remains top-of-mind for the next generation,” said Farm Credit Midsouth President & CEO, James McJunkins, on behalf of the Farm Credit cooperatives of Arkansas.

Entry forms are available at [www.aad.arkansas.gov](http://www.aad.arkansas.gov). Entries should be submitted by September 9, 2016. School garden contest winners in 2015 included Yellville-Summit Schools (Marion County), Kingston School (Madison County), Forest Park Elementary School (Pulaski County) and Magnet Cove High School (Hot Spring County). In most cases, school gardens are supported by community donations, grant funding, or student fundraising efforts. Raised and in-ground garden bed structures, greenhouses and/or hoop houses, as well as containers were used by schools to grow produce.

The Arkansas Grown program promotes food and products grown in Arkansas by Arkansas producers, and helps make the connection between growers and buyers. Arkansas Grown is a program of the

Arkansas Agriculture Department. Find producers, farmer's markets, and other local fresh food resources at [www.arkansasgrown.org](http://www.arkansasgrown.org).

With approximately \$3.2 billion in assets, AgHeritage Farm Credit Services, Delta Agricultural Credit Association, Farm Credit Midsouth, Farm Credit of Western Arkansas support rural communities and agriculture across Arkansas with reliable, consistent credit and financial services today and tomorrow. The four Farm Credit associations in Arkansas are owned by the more than 10,750 customers. Through the cooperative structure, customer-owners have a voice and vote in the associations' governance and share in their cooperatives' financial success through cooperative returns, which total more than \$168.0 million since 1997.

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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.*