



Arkansas Research and Promotion Boards

2023 Annual Report

(August 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)

Respectfully Submitted to:

The Honorable Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Governor
Chair, House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development
Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development

Submitted in accordance with A.C.A 25-38-203 (13)

Arkansas Research and Promotion Boards

Act 712 of the 2023 Regular Session of the Arkansas General transferred the following six agriculture commodity boards to the Arkansas Department of Agriculture:

- Arkansas Beef Council
- Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board
- Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
- Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board
- Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
- Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board

Act 712 also revised the membership categories for the boards and directed the Department to provide administrative support to the boards. A summary of these entities' responsibilities, members, and recent activities is provided below. Because Act 712 had an effective date of August 1, 2023, this report includes activities of the board that occurred after August 1, 2023.

Arkansas Beef Council

The Arkansas Beef Council was created to promote the growth and development of the beef cattle industry in Arkansas by research, promotion, and market development. The board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate as follows:

- Four cattle producers actively and principally engaged in the cattle industry from each of the four congressional districts
- Two cattle producers actively and principally engaged in the cattle industry from the state at large
- One active Arkansas livestock market operator representing the state at large

The members are appointed for three-year terms.

Board activities are funded by an assessment of \$1.00 per head on all cattle sold in the state, with 50 cents remitted to the federal Cattlemen's Beef Board and the remainder retained by the state.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) collected \$944,150.56 in assessments on cattle sold in the state. Of that total, DFA retained \$13,778.68 in Treasury Charges and remitted \$437,645.84 to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, \$54,383.54 to Qualified State Boards in other states for out-of-state cattle sold in Arkansas, and \$438,342.50 to the Arkansas Beef Council.

Board Member	Location	Term
Terry Laster	Strong	2023
Jerry Christie	Nashville	2023
Chase Groves	Garland	2024
Sam Cecil	Russellville	2024
Caleb Plyer	Hope	2025
Robert Campbell	Witt Springs	2025
Sharon Kay Casey	Malvern	2025

Since August 1, 2023, the Arkansas Beef Council met December 7, 2023 and has participated in several outreach and educational projects, including the Arkansas State Fair, Brookhill Ranch, and a tailgating event at the University of Central Arkansas. Several board members attended the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA)’s mid-year meeting in San Diego, CA.

The Beef Council continues to publish a monthly newsletter and have a monthly article in the Arkansas Cattle Business publication. The council is also providing posters to all livestock markets in the state to make producers more aware of how beef checkoff funds are used.

The Beef Council has numerous promotional projects planned for 2024, including a partnership with Arkansas State University’s meat processing program to develop beef sticks to be shared at promotional events. Plans are also underway for Arkansas Burger Month in July 2024.

Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board

The Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board was created to plan and conduct a program of research, extension, market development, and advertising designed to promote the Arkansas catfish industry.

The board consists of seven members of the catfish industry in Arkansas appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Each member is appointed for a two-year term.

Activities of the Board are funded by an assessment on the sale of catfish feed within Arkansas to commercial catfish producers at a rate not to exceed \$5.00 per ton of catfish feed sold.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) collected \$23,812.63 in assessments on the sale of catfish feed in Arkansas. DFA retained \$739.41 in Treasury Charges and remitted \$23,073.22 to the Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board.

Board Member	Location	Term
Greg Moyers	Portland	2023

Terry Kruse	McCrory	2023
Steve Kueter	Paragould	2024
Kenny Frances	Corning	2024
Brad Graham	Portland	2024
Dick Baxter	Cabot	2024
Larry Dorman	Montrose	2025

Since August 1, 2023, members of the Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board participated in the 2023 Arkansas Catfish Month proclamation event on August 3, 2023, and the board met September 19, 2023 to review project funding and other board expenditures. The board’s next meeting will be held on January 25, 2024 in conjunction with the Catfish Farmers of Arkansas meeting in Hot Springs on January 25-26, 2024.

Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board

The Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board was created to plan and conduct a program of research and extension designed to promote the corn and grain sorghum industry in Arkansas. The board consists of seven members who are practical producers of corn or grain sorghum in Arkansas. Each board member is appointed for a two-year term by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

Activities of the board are funded through the assessment of one cent per bushel on all corn and grain sorghum grown within Arkansas. The assessment is deducted from the amount paid to the producer at the first point of sale or at the point where the corn or grain sorghum enters into the United States Department of Agriculture loan program.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) collected \$1,050,172.47 in assessments on corn and grain sorghum grown in Arkansas. DFA retained \$32,578.60 in Treasury Charges and remitted \$1,017,593.87 to the Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board.

Board Member	Location	Term
Trent Dabbs	Stuttgart	2023
Matt Gammill	Tyronza	2024
Jason Felton	Marianna	2024
Jacob Appleberry	Tillar	2024
Kenny Falwell	Newport	2024
Patrick Matt Smith	Blytheville	2025
Tommy Young	Tuckerman	2025

Since August 1, 2023, several members of the Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Board met on August 31, 2023, with representatives of Corporacion Multi Inversiones (CMI), one of the largest

importers and end-user of feed grains in Central America and provided a tour of board chairman Tommy Young’s farm in Newport, Arkansas. The tour was part of a week-long tour hosted by the United State Grains Council.

Mr. Young has been selected to represent the Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Board in January 2024 on a mission trip to Thailand and Vietnam to meet key end-users of U.S. grain. The trip is sponsored by the U.S. Grains Council. Several members will be attending the Commodity Classic convention in March 2024.

Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board

The Rice Research and Promotion Board was created to plan and conduct a program of research, extension, market development, and advertising designed to promote the rice industry in Arkansas. The board consists of nine Arkansas rice producers appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Four members must be designated representatives of the Arkansas rice merchant and milling industry. Members serve two-year terms.

Board activities are funded through an assessment of 1.35 cents per bushel paid by the buyer at the first point of sale on rice grown within the state or at the point the rice enters into the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan program. Producers also pay an assessment of 1.35 cents per bushel of rice grown. The assessments paid by buyers must be used for market development and promotion. The assessments paid by producers must be used for rice extension and research.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) collected \$4,694,096.22 in assessments on Arkansas grown rice sold or entering the USDA loan program. DFA retained \$145,527.93 in Treasury Charges and remitted \$4,548,568.29 to the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board.

Board Member	Location	Term
Jay Coker	Stuttgart	2024
Roger Pohlner	Fisher	2024
John King III	Helena	2024
Joe Christian	Jonesboro	2024
Jim Whitaker	McGehee	2025
Jeff Rutledge	Newport	2025
David Gairhan	Jonesboro	2025
Charles Williams	Crawfordsville	2025
Scott Matthews	Weiner	2025

Since August 1, 2023, the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board met on August 2, 2023, and participated in the Rice Field Day at the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture’s (UADA) Rice Research and Extension facility in Stuttgart on August 3, 2023. The board also met on November 2, 2023, and has received research project status reports at each meeting.

Several members attended the 2023 Rice Outlook Conference in Indian Wells, CA in December 2023. Jay Coker will participate in the UADA rice breeding program review in Stuttgart in January 2024. The board is in the process of scheduling meetings in January and February 2024.

Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board

The Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board was established to conduct plans, projects, or activities to strengthen the soybean industry’s position in the marketplace. The board consists of nine soybean producers appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Members serve two-year terms.

The board’s activities are paid from an assessment of .25 percent of the market price of all soybeans grown within Arkansas. Assessments are collected by the first purchaser at the point of sale.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) collected \$10,661,046.88 in assessments on Arkansas soybeans sold. DFA retained \$317,099.12 in Treasury Charges and remitted \$4,948,221.97 to the United Soybean Board, \$438,553.29 to Qualified State Boards in other states on out-of-state soybeans sold in Arkansas, and \$4,957,172.50 to the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board.

Board Member	Location	Term
Joe Thrash	Houston	2023
John Freeman	Dumas	2023
Josh Cureton	Cash	2023
West Higginbothom	Marianna	2024
Douglas Hartz	Stuttgart	2024
Rusty Smith	Des Arc	2024
Shannon Davis	Bono	2024
Donald Morton, Jr	Des Arc	2025
Brad Doyle	Weiner	2025

Since August 1, 2023, the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board met on August 9, 2023, and November 3, 2023. Members were notified at the August meeting that timely action prior to August 1 had not been taken on two contracts, an advertising contract and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the board and the University of Arkansas regarding research.

Department staff worked with the appropriate entities to update the MOA and developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the advertising contract. On November 3, 2023, the board approved the MOA, a 2024 marketing plan, and a refund to a producer who had overpaid into the checkoff. At the request of the board, Department staff continue to work on an RFP to procure a communications/promotions service contractor.

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for January 10, 2024. Several members will attend the Commodity Classic convention in March 2024.

Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board

The Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board was created to promote the growth and development of the Arkansas wheat industry by research, extension, promotion, and market development. The board consists of seven Arkansas wheat producers appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Members serve two-year terms.

The board's activities are funded by an assessment of one cent per bushel on all wheat grown in Arkansas. The assessment is deducted from the amount paid the producer at the first point of sale or at the point the wheat enters into the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan program.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration collected \$97,240.98 on Arkansas wheat sold or entering the USDA loan program. DFA retained \$3,015.25 in Treasury Charges and remitted \$94,225.73 to the Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board.

Board Member	Location	Term
John Schwartz	Weiner	2021
Tim Smith	Clarendon	2022
Kenneth Clark	Newport	2023
Terrance Scott	Cotton Plant	2023
Adam Cloninger	Keo	2023
David Wallace	Crawfordsville	2023
Jack Evans	Carlisle	2024
Dusty Hoskyn	England	2024
Chris Shaefers	Conway	2024

The board has not met since August 1, 2023, but plans to hold a meeting in February 2024.

Going Forward

The Department of Agriculture will continue to provide training for all research and promotion boards on Freedom of Information Act compliance, board member responsibilities and ethics, and other topics. The Department's fiscal section has made several improvements to streamline the invoicing and payment processes of the boards, including processes to aid grantees in applying and tracking payments. The Department will continue to review processes for efficiency improvements.

The Department's marketing and communications team has absorbed a portion of the Arkansas Beef Council's marketing efforts that had previously been contracted to a third party, which has resulted in significant cost savings for the Board. The Department will continue to work with each board to determine other avenues for cost savings.