

ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

FY 2018 – FY 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION: The Arkansas Agriculture Department provides leadership and implements programs for agriculture, natural resources, consumer protection, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management.

VISION: To promote and ensure a productive and sustainable agricultural industry that feeds, clothes, and shelters Arkansans and others throughout the nation and world; that enhances and protects our State’s natural resources through healthy and productive forests, and private working lands; and secures a competitive, fair marketplace for crops, livestock, poultry, food industries, and consumers.

CORE VALUES: Our success depends on:

- **Transparency** – making the Department open and accessible to educate the public about how the Arkansas Agriculture Department supports the state’s largest industry and individual Arkansans.
- **Participation** – providing opportunities for constituents to shape and improve services.
- **Collaboration** – working cooperatively with public and private partners on policy and programs affecting a broad audience.
- **Accountability** – ensuring that employee activities achieve the Department’s strategic plan.
- **Customer Focus** – serving our customers and stakeholders by delivering balanced programs that address their diverse needs.
- **Professionalism**– building and maintaining a highly skilled, ethical, and compassionate workforce.
- **Efficiency** – ensuring resources are used in the most effective and productive manner possible.
- **Teamwork** – working together as “one team” for the success of the Department and its constituents.

GOAL 1: IMPLEMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE SILOS WITHIN THE AGENCY TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY, IMPROVE UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES, AND ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE WITH ENABLING LEGISLATION

AAD Goal 1 aligns with State of Arkansas Goals: Grow, Educate, Quality of Life, and Efficient and Responsive

Measurable Objective 1: Update and revise as necessary all employee policies and procedures and implement new ones as needed to ensure uniformity across the department to the extent possible.

Strategy 1: Human Resource, fiscal, and legal staffs will work together to review and revise employee policies and procedures.

Strategy 2: Department leadership will develop succession plans for leadership positions.

Strategy 3: All employees will prepare a Standard Operating Procedure document and Turnover Binder for his or her position.

Measurable Objective 2: Department leadership, division managers, and other appropriate staff will work together to share and improve utilization of staff, buildings, office space, and other assets.

Strategy 1: Improve coordination of emergency response capabilities between agencies by designating one staff person to oversee compliance with all training requirements.

Strategy 2: The Asset Manager will develop a comprehensive list of all buildings, office space, and other fixed assets.

Strategy 3: Implement cross-training opportunities and programs across the Department for emergency response capabilities and to allow employees to assist in other program areas during workload peaks and lulls.

Measurable Objective 3: Improve the use of technology and communication.

Strategy 1: All agencies within the department will utilize the Department's Communication and Marketing staff for all agency and division marketing and promotional activities to improve the efficient use of employee time and resources, uniformity of messaging, and the maximization of cross-promotional opportunities.

Strategy 2: Promotional materials and resources will be developed to educate the public about the overall Department and its agencies, programs, and services.

Strategy 3: Improve technology across all programs within the Department to better serve constituents and employees.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, RESPONSIVE, TIMELY, AND ENFORCEABLE PROTECTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

AAD Goal 2 aligns with State of Arkansas Goals: Grow, Educate, Quality of Life, Safe and Efficient and Responsive

Measurable Objective 1: Protect consumers and producers by ensuring fair trading practices and compliance with regulations governing agricultural and food related establishments, products, applicators, dealers, and service providers.

Strategy 1: Update exams and study materials for testing and licensing programs annually and hold weekly or monthly testing opportunities.

Strategy 2: Streamline testing, licensing, inspections, registration, reporting and tracking procedures by implementing online systems.

Strategy 3: Establish sampling, testing, auditing and inspection minimums for each regulated industry sector without established requirements.

Strategy 4: Establish turn-around times¹ for all programs.

Strategy 5: Provide adequate training for employees and conduct education outreach activities for regulated sectors.

Measurable Objective 2: Safeguard human and animal health and maintain readiness for animal disease challenges and emergency response.

Strategy 1: Maintain and update Arkansas Animal Health Regulations to address current disease challenges by the end of FY 2019.

Strategy 2: Provide multiple trainings annually for animal disease and emergency response.

Strategy 3: Respond to regulatory animal disease challenges and animal emergency response needs within 24 hours of initial notification.

Strategy 4: Facilitate compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services' (VS) Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Rule² by increasing the use of electronic Animal Health Documents by 10% by the end of FY 2019.

The chart below reflects the use of electronic Animal Health Documents from January – March 2017.

¹ The elapsed time between case accession and case reporting.

² A United States Department of Agriculture rule published in 2013 focusing on the official identification of animals for the purposes of interstate movement and the documentation regarding of the interstate movement of animals. The ultimate goal is to facilitate the rapid traceability of infected animals in a disease outbreak, allow the identification of exposed and/or at risk animals, and mitigate the negative impact of disease and disease investigations on animals and producers.

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/SA_Traceability

Species	FY 2017 Hardcopy/Electronic	FY 2017 Percentage of Electronic Animal Health Documents	FY 2019 Goal Hardcopy/Electronic	FY 2019 Goal for Electronic Animal Health Documents
Bovine	70/3052	2.9%	393/3052	12.9%
Ovine and Caprine	16/173	18.4%	49/173	28.4%
Equine	309/1245	38.7%	606/1245	48.7%
Swine	222/2817	37.3%	1332/2817	47.3%

Measurable Objective 3: Protect forest resources by providing wildland fire prevention, detection, suppression, enforcement, and data; AND providing wildland fire training, equipment, programs, and other emergency response capabilities and resources to partners, fire departments, and landowners.

Strategy 1: All Arkansas Forestry Commission staff and partners will receive appropriate and specific technical training in safety protocols, equipment operation, fire management and tools, and/or forest management procedures and tools.

Strategy 2: Provide an increased level of protection to rural communities and forest resources through wildfire prevention, detection and suppression.

Reduce the five year annual average number of fires and impacted acreage by 1% in 2 years.

Strategy 3: Serve communities and fire departments by providing organization, equipment, training and funding.

At least 50 firefighting vehicles and associated equipment will be provided to Volunteer or Rural Fire Departments³ annually.

Representatives from at least 400 rural fire departments will be provided wildland fire suppression training annually.

Strategy 4: Investigate and assist with prosecution of wildland arson, timber theft, illegal dumping and logging equipment theft and vandalism.

All case investigations will be initiated within 2 weeks of receipt of a valid complaint.

Measurable Objective 4: Provide protection from improper pesticide use, invasive species and pests.

Strategy 1: Conduct surveys, and develop and enforce quarantines in response to invasive species.

Strategy 2: Promote educational opportunities for responsible pesticide use and application.

³ A Rural Fire Department is any fire department that serves a community of 10,000 people or less.

Strategy 3: Administer the Abandoned Pesticide Disposal program to remove unwanted pesticides from the environment through public collections funded by pesticide manufacturers.

GOAL 3: DEMONSTRATE AND IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES TO ESTABLISH, CONSERVE, UTILIZE, AND MONITOR FORESTS AND RELATED NATURAL RESOURCES THAT WILL ENHANCE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

AAD Goal 3 aligns with State of Arkansas Goals: Grow and Quality of Life

Measurable Objective 1: Monitor the composition and health of Arkansas’s forests and provide geographical data which includes tree species, distribution, growth, volume, insects and diseases.

Strategy 1: Twenty percent of Forest Inventory and Analysis⁴ plot measurements will be completed each year. Stakeholders will be notified of major insect or disease outbreaks within one month of detection.

Strategy 2: Measure and submit all forest resource data on 20% of the state’s 4,370 Forest Inventory plots annually while maintaining at least a Quality Assurance/Quality Control average of 87% .

Strategy 3: Regularly inform citizens of Arkansas, forest stakeholders and partners including the Arkansas Economic Development Commission of the environmental and economic importance of and threats to Arkansas’s forests.

Measurable Objective 2: Provide assistance through technical advice, training, and resources to at least 2,000 forest landowners annually.

Strategy 1: With partners, examine and evaluate landowner properties and prepare professional forest management plans with recommendations for landowner objectives and information on assistance programs.

Provide technical assistance, encourage sustainable forest management through the Forest Stewardship Programs⁵ and the Tree Farm Systems⁶, and implement practices where appropriate.

⁴ Forest Inventory and Analysis is a program of USDA Forest Service that is a continuously updated inventory of the nation’s forests.

⁵ A program that provides technical assistance for non-industrial private landowners. The program is a USDA Forest Service program administered locally by AFC. <http://www.aad.arkansas.gov/forest-stewardship>

⁶ An American Forest Foundation program that is a forest certification system administered by the Arkansas Forestry Association with many partners including AFC. <http://www.arkforests.org/?page=treefarm>

Strategy 2: Increase Stewardship Certification⁷ by a minimum of 2% annually.

Strategy 3: Work with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to identify and specifically target assistance to underserved landowners and identify opportunities to increase audience diversity utilizing innovative partnerships to attract non-traditional landowners.

Strategy 4: Monitor and deliver training on voluntary Best Management Practices⁸ for Water Quality Protection with industry partners to at least 250 loggers, landowners, or foresters annually.

*Inform partners of voluntary Best Management Practice implementation rates.
Investigate and mitigate all complaints using an established methodology.*

Measurable Objective 3: Assist communities, local governments, and landowners by providing them with training and education regarding the management of community forests and individual trees. Assistance, advice and training will be provided to at least 24 communities and 100 tree and landscape professionals annually.

Strategy 1: Promote the International Society of Arboriculture⁹ Arborist Certification program¹⁰.

Strategy 2: Inform city councils, mayors, tree boards and volunteers on the environmental benefits of trees and their care, promote green infrastructure¹¹ planning with communities, and provide disaster preparedness and recovery assistance.

Strategy 3: Fund and provide guidance to the Arkansas Urban Forestry Council¹².

Measurable Objective 4: Improve genetic sources of pine and select hardwood seed. Produce, store, and distribute at least 7 million high quality seed and seedlings annually.

Strategy 1: Cooperate with conservation partners to educate landowners about tree improvement especially in regards to economic impact.

Strategy 2: Determine the most appropriate species and target numbers to efficiently produce each year.

Strategy 3: Train field personnel in inventory/cooler procedures and proper seedling handling and specifications, and maintain network of remote seedling coolers throughout the state.

⁷ Stewardship certification occurs when a county forester certifies that recommended practices of a plan have been implemented.

⁸ Best Management Practices – Arkansas Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Protection which are voluntary and administered by AFC. <http://www.aad.arkansas.gov/best-management-practices-water-quality>

⁹ Professional organization of arborists. <http://www.isa-arbor.com/>

¹⁰ Certification for individuals trained and knowledgeable in all aspects of arboriculture who have met experience requirements, pass ISA exams, and maintain certification through continuing education. This certification is accredited by the American National Standards Institute.

¹¹ An interconnected network of green space that conserves natural systems and provides assorted benefits to human populations.

¹² Non-profit whose mission is to educate the public about the benefits of urban trees and tree care. Council membership is open to the public and a governing board is elected by members. <http://arkansastrees.org/>

Measurable Objective 5: Demonstrate forestry practices that promote timber production, recreation, water quality, research, and wildlife habitat.

Strategy 1: Annually conduct a forest management workshop for private landowners to demonstrate how to (1) grow timber by natural and artificial regeneration, (2) properly implement Best Management Practices, and (3) restore and maintain wildlife habitat and other forest ecosystem services.

Strategy 2: Update current Poison Springs State Forest's¹³ Forest Management Plan and acquire and maintain third party forest sustainability certification with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

Identify and add appropriate land(s) to Poison Springs State Forest each year.

Strategy 3: Utilizing both natural regeneration and plantation management, grow pine or hardwood on species appropriate areas of Poison Springs State Forest to economic maturity and sell for the highest price that the current market conditions will support, providing at least \$700,000 in revenue to the Forestry Commission's trust fund annually.

GOAL 4: THE VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY AND LEGALLY DEFENSIBLE DIAGNOSTIC RESULTS IN A TIMELY, EFFICIENT, AND PROFESSIONAL MANNER

AAD Goal 4 aligns with State of Arkansas Goals: Health, Quality of Life, and Efficient and Responsive

Measurable Objective 1: The Veterinary Diagnostic Lab will communicate to the public a clear and concise commitment to target turn-around times for all diagnostic testing.

Strategy 1: The Veterinary Diagnostic Lab will list the target turn-around times alongside available test procedures in our written and publicly available *Guide Book and Fee Schedule*.

Factors that can potentially prevent attainment of target turn-around times will be identified and communicated to the public.

Strategy 2: Determination of Unknown Turn-around Times.

Those diagnostic test procedures which currently do not have established turn-around times will be evaluated on the basis of historic trends and other measures in order to devise reasonable target turn-around times.

Measurable Objective 2: The Veterinary Diagnostic Lab will establish criteria for the prioritization of services that are offered to the public no later than January 2019.

Strategy 1: Diagnostic testing will be prioritized for livestock and poultry production versus companion animal care.

¹³ Twenty three thousand plus acre demonstration forest located western Ouachita and eastern Nevada counties.

Test procedures will be evaluated based on their relative importance, and those that are mission-critical to producers will be prioritized.

Strategy 2: Testing fees for sick companion animals will be adjusted to market conditions, and elective procedures for companion animals will be evaluated on asset allocation.

Measurable Objective 3: No later than January 2018, the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab will optimize the legal defensibility of all offered diagnostic testing services with regard to owner-submissions¹⁴.

Strategy 1: A written statement of internal policy will be developed to better define the extent of our services in alignment with the Arkansas Veterinary Medical Practice Act¹⁵.

Strategy 2: Advance notice of the policy change will be provided.

A brochure providing information about the new policy and the necessity of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship will be developed and made available to the public dropping off specimens at the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab.

ADDITIONAL PLAN INFORMATION:

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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¹⁴ Testing requests submitted by the owner of an animal rather than by a veterinarian in a veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

¹⁵ An Act to define the practice of Veterinary Medicine; to establish the qualifications for licensure to practice Veterinary Medicine, to create the Veterinary Medical Examining Board and to define its powers and duties; to provide for the certification of Veterinary Technicians; to certify continuing education in the field of Veterinary Medicine; to provide for the denial, suspension or revocation of licensure; to establish certain exemptions from licensure; to establish penalties for the illegal practice of Veterinary Medicine; to declare an emergency; and for other purposes.

