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Arkansas Agriculture Department & Farm Credit Announce 2017 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest Winners

Little Rock, AR – The Arkansas Agriculture Department and Farm Credit of Arkansas are pleased to announce the winners of the 2017 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year contest:

- Overall School Garden Winner:
Mayflower Elementary School, Mayflower (Faulkner County)
- Best Nutrition Education Based School Garden:
King Elementary, Van Buren (Crawford County)
- Best Environmental Based Education School Garden:
Sheridan Intermediate School, Sheridan (Grant County)
- Best Community Collaboration School Garden:
James R. Tate Elementary, Van Buren (Crawford County)
- Best School Garden Start-Up Proposal:
Clarendon High School, Clarendon (Monroe County)

The Overall School Garden Winner will receive \$1000 and the winning schools in the remaining categories will receive \$500. Monetary awards are provided by Farm Credit. Governor Hutchinson recognized winning schools during a special ceremony today at the State Capitol.

“School gardens create valuable teaching experiences because they incorporate hands-on activities with lessons in food production, good nutrition, and the overall importance of agriculture. I commend the efforts of educators, students, and partners involved with making communities healthier through student-led food initiatives like school gardens,” says Governor Hutchinson.

The Arkansas Agriculture Department and Farm Credit of Arkansas started the contest in 2014 to promote the importance of involving young people in the process of fresh food production and cultivation. Any Arkansas school, grades pre-K-12, with a working school garden during the 2016-2017 school year, or with a startup proposal for the 2017-2018 school year was eligible to apply.

“As a farmer-owned cooperative, we believe it’s important to support local food system initiatives such as the Arkansas Grown School Garden Program,” said Farm Credit Midsouth President and CEO, James McJunkins, on behalf of the Farm Credit cooperatives of Arkansas. “Local food projects like this are a great way to educate the next generation and the public about food production and agriculture,” he said.

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. Learn more at arkansasgrown.org.

With approximately \$3 billion in assets, AgHeritage Farm Credit Services, Delta Agricultural Credit Association, Farm Credit Midsouth, and Farm Credit of Western Arkansas support rural communities and agriculture across Arkansas with reliable, consistent credit and financial services today and tomorrow. The Farm Credit cooperatives of Arkansas are owned by the more than 10,000 customers. Through the cooperative structure, customer-owners have a voice and vote in the associations' governance and share in their cooperative's financial success through cooperative returns, which total more than \$165 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.