



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
Governor

1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205  
agriculture.arkansas.gov  
(501) 225-1598

Wes Ward  
Secretary of Agriculture

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Contact: Ayden Duncan, 501-813-6012

[ayden.duncan@arkansas.gov](mailto:ayden.duncan@arkansas.gov)

### **Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board Approves \$2.86 Million in Funding**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR** – The Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board approved \$2,860,000 in funding for five promotion projects at its February 5, 2026 meeting. The approved projects will support the growth and market development of the state’s rice industry.

“Arkansas is the largest rice-producing state in the United States, and the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board plays a vital role in supporting our rice farmers,” said Jim Whitaker, Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board Chair. “By investing in promotion of rice through assessment collections today, the board increases market access and demand for Arkansas rice both domestically and internationally in the future.”

The board received 11 total proposals requesting \$2,986,044 in funding. The request for proposals was open from December 5, 2025, to January 9, 2026. The board will meet to discuss research projects at its meeting on February 25–26, 2026. Funding decisions are made by board members at open public meetings.

Promotion projects selected for funding include:

- **USA Rice – \$2,800,000 (Contingent Upon Assessment Collections)**  
Supports domestic and international marketing, education, and promotion efforts to increase consumption of U.S.-grown rice and improve market access overseas.
- **The Rice Foundation – \$35,000**  
Supports industry-wide research and education initiatives that address priority needs across the rice value chain and benefit multiple rice-producing states.
- **University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture – Rice Discovery Program – \$10,000**  
Provides hands-on learning opportunities and classroom resources to help educators integrate rice and agriculture education into K–12 instruction.
- **University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture – Arkansas Future Ag Leaders Tour – \$5,000**  
Supports a statewide leadership and professional development program for high school students interested in agricultural careers.
- **Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance – Arkansas Staples for Strong Families – \$10,000**  
Promotes Arkansas-grown rice as a nutritious, affordable staple through education, cooking demonstrations, and outreach at food pantries and community sites.

The 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.

The board consists of nine Arkansas rice producers appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate with four members being designated representatives of the Arkansas rice merchant and milling industry. Members serve two-year terms.

Learn more about the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board on the Department's website [here](#).

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**About the Arkansas Department of Agriculture**

*The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture, forestry, and natural resources to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while conserving natural resources and ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. For more information, visit [agriculture.arkansas.gov/](http://agriculture.arkansas.gov/).*