



# GOAL ONE

MAKING ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE  
COMPETITIVE IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY





To successfully compete in the global economy, Arkansas agriculture must maximize its advantages while effectively addressing challenges that may place us at a disadvantage. One major advantage is the dominant presence of mature national and international agribusinesses. Our dominant agribusinesses are effectively suited to the regional topography of Arkansas agricultural lands.

Continuing success depends on innovations that reduce labor costs, improve yield, product value and quality and increase consumer acceptance.

Challenges to the continued survival of Arkansas agribusinesses threaten to devastate our rural economy by eliminating the principal source of farm income and wages in numerous counties. The economic viability of many agricultural enterprises depends on federal support programs, which have been threatened during recent budget cycles. Agricultural issues include, but are not limited to, diseases, foodborne pathogens, environmental concerns and labor. Agriculture must continue to address the use of biotechnology and the potential introduction of genetically modified organisms into the human food chain and environment. Controversies surrounding virtually all of these issues have also been used

to create marketing and trade barriers designed by foreign and domestic interests to nullify technological advances.

These issues must be addressed at the scientific research, educational and production levels if Arkansas agriculture is to maintain and expand its share of the export market. Focused research, teaching and extension programs by the Division of Agriculture should “partner up” to serve the research, development and educational needs of Arkansas agribusinesses.

## TRADE POLICY

The U of A Division of Agriculture will:

- Identify marketing and trade policy opportunities and constraints.
- Analyze the scientific basis for realizing opportunities and overcoming constraints.
- Work with agribusinesses to take advantage of market opportunities.

Arkansas agriculture is directly tied to competing in domestic and international markets and marketing value-added products. Agriculture’s future prosperity with a market-oriented farm policy is dependent on growth in demand and a level playing field in the international trade market.

## TECHNOLOGY

The U of A Division of Agriculture will:

- Hire, train and retain the best professionals.
- Invest in state-of-the-art systems and methods to enhance technology transfer.
- Partner with industry, commodity groups, etc., to facilitate technology development and adoption.
- Identify specific issues to be targeted for focused technological improvement.
- Put teaching, research and extension on the forefront with new and practical technology that will impact Arkansans.

Technology development and application drive Arkansas agriculture. New technology, changing demographics, agriculture policy, public perception and competition for space are all factors in agriculture's sustainability.

A realistic approach to continued success in international, free market competition requires the relentless development and delivery of improved agricultural technology. The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture is perfectly positioned to perform the research on and development of technology to support the competitiveness of Arkansas agriculture.



## PUBLIC AWARENESS OF IMPACTS OF AGRICULTURE

The U of A Division of Agriculture will:

- Interact with non-traditional organizations and audiences.
- Enhance and expand youth education programs to teach the science of agriculture.
- Develop curricula designed to increase awareness of the importance and impact of agriculture.

Agriculture continues to be a major industry in Arkansas, ranking 12th nationally in agriculture production. The agricultural sector in Arkansas makes up more than 12.3 percent of the gross state product, and one out of every five jobs is related to agriculture. Fifteen percent of Arkansas wages, over \$8.7 billion, is generated by agriculture or agriculture-related jobs. Despite these impressive numbers, many Arkansans are unaware of the major impact agriculture makes in the state. Public awareness must be emphasized because agricultural systems and environmental stewardship are significant public issues.

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

The U of A Division of Agriculture will:

- Expand programs for effective sustainable agriculture systems.
- Provide science-based information to be used in the development of regulatory policy. Assist producers with regulatory implementation.
- Initiate cooperative work among scientific disciplines to fine-tune the best management practices over a variety of geographic regions.

Agricultural producers seek economic success and the well-being of their families. Sustaining agriculture requires management alternatives that are environmentally and economically viable. Sustainability must be perceived as a benchmark

for evaluating every aspect of agricultural systems from policy implications to production inputs and marketing.

The systems approach to management will ensure protection of Arkansas' natural resources (land, water, air, etc.). The benefits of a farm and/or ranch bio-security plan provide protection of Arkansas' natural resources and the food supply. Agriculture now operates in a business environment characterized by change, risk, governmental policy and global competition. The agricultural sector is dynamic, responding to change created by competition with the trend toward fewer and larger farms and agribusinesses.

Successful direct or niche markets permit producers to realize higher incomes or to create higher returns from an existing marketing structure.

Production and processing are the one, two punch of Arkansas agriculture. Processors of farm commodities and agribusinesses that serve both producers and processors provide jobs in small towns and cities throughout the state.

