



RE: Arkansas Elementary Agriculture Education Pilot Program

DATE: January 6, 2025

Agriculture touches 100% of the world, 100% of the time.

In 2023, the Arkansas State Legislature passed a bill that became Act 243 to establish the **Arkansas Elementary Agriculture Education Pilot Program**. This three-year pilot program introduces students grades K-6 to Arkansas agriculture through lessons taught in a classroom using state standards-based curriculum. The pilot will determine if the program can be an option for all elementary schools in Arkansas. The pilot program is a partnership between Arkansas Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom programs, AR Farm Bureau Foundation, and the AR Department of Education.

These courses will introduce young learners to the dynamic world of Arkansas agriculture. Students will explore key agricultural concepts in plant and animal systems, food production, and agricultural mechanics. Children discover how agriculture fundamentally impacts our daily lives by investigating these areas. The curriculum emphasizes leadership development and career exploration, connecting students with opportunities in agricultural fields. Through hands-on learning, students also gain insights into forestry, environmental systems, and natural resource management. The goal is to inspire curiosity about Arkansas agriculture and nurture future environmental stewards.

Interested elementary and middle schools will be required to dedicate at least one instructor to the program but can use their discretion on the class format (separate like, i.e., art, music, etc.) or part of the core class design. The curriculum is free to the school, with hands-on programs encouraged. Community involvement and sponsorship are encouraged to help with supply expenses for specific lessons.

Professional development workshops will be conducted in July 2025. These will feature licensure opportunities for elementary teachers to be certified to teach agriculture lessons and ag teachers to be certified to teach elementary students. The workshop will feature curriculum training.

Schools can apply for the pilot program with the deadline of February 15, 2025. For more information or if you have questions, please let us know.

Contact:

Donette Spann

Director, Ag in the Classroom

AR Elementary Agriculture Education (EAE) Pilot Program

Office: (501) 228-1222

Mobile: (501) 804-8222

donette.spann@arfb.com