

A Newcomers Guide to Agriculture in Boone County, Arkansas

Welcome to Boone County!

The purpose of this publication is to answer some of the basic agricultural questions that new landowners typically have soon after moving to Boone County. This publication is not meant to answer all of your questions about agricultural enterprises, but will hopefully help you find the answers you need.

General County Information

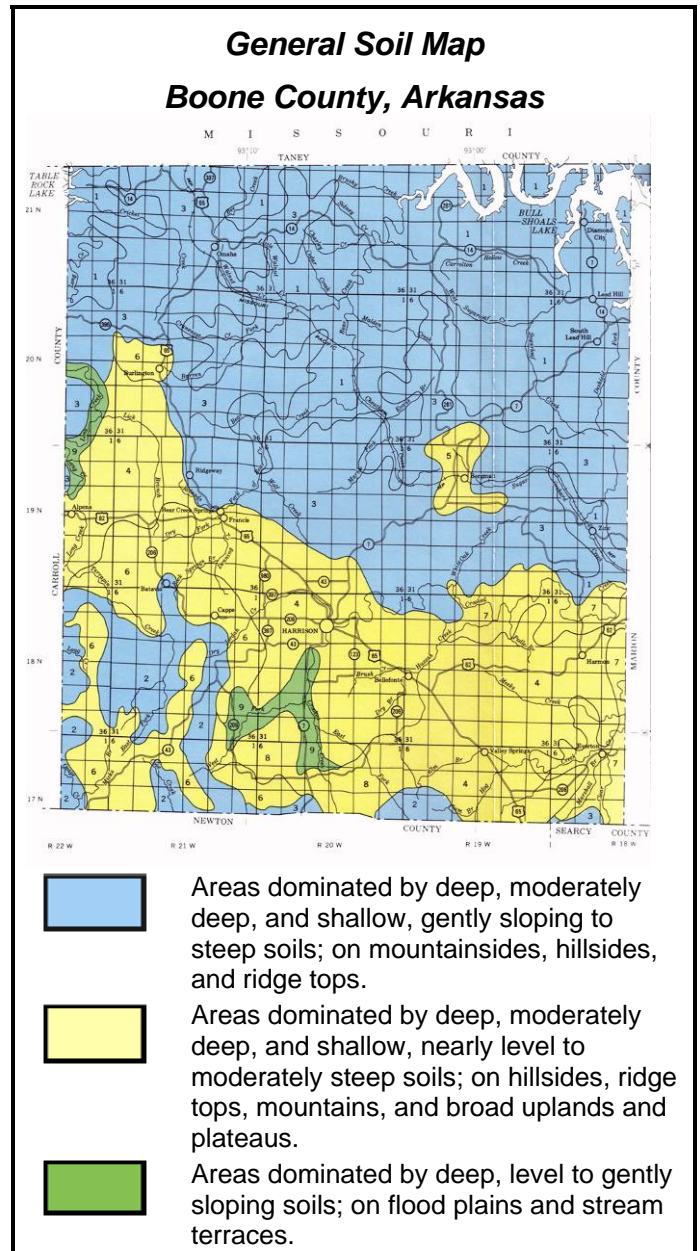
Boone County is in northwestern Arkansas. It extends about 26 miles from north to south and 23 miles from east to west. It is bounded on the north by Missouri, on the west by Carroll County, on the south by Newton and Searcy Counties, and the east by Marion County. The approximate total land area of Boone County is 386,560 acres, or 604 square miles.

The population of Boone County in 2000 was 33,942. Harrison, the county's largest city and county seat, has a population of 12,152 (2000 Census). For a more complete profile of Boone County's population, education, employment, income, retail, health, households, agriculture, forestry, property assessments, and transportation visit www.uaex.edu/boone/county_profile.

Land in Boone County

Boone County is within three physiographic areas of the Ozark Highlands. About half of the county is on the Springfield Plateau, and the rest is distributed in the Boston Mountains and on the Salem Plateau.

The southwestern part of the county is in the Boston Mountains. Here, the stream valleys are about 1,200 to 1,400 feet above sea level. They range from a little wider than the stream itself to as much as one-fourth mile wide. The mountaintops are mainly gently sloping, long, and winding. They are 500 feet to 2 miles wide, and most are at an



elevation of about 1,700 to 2,000 feet. A few are 2,200 feet above sea level. Some are rimmed with a prominent bedrock escarpment.

The Springfield Plateau is adjacent to the Boston Mountains but is lower in elevation. Much of it is strongly dissected by streams. The dissected areas are characterized by gently sloping to moderately

sloping, long, narrow, winding ridges and rolling to steep side slopes having gradients of 12 to 50 percent. These side slopes form V-shaped valleys. Elevations are about 1,000 to 1,250 feet. There is a broad, nearly level to gently sloping upland area at Bergman. Another one is south of Harrison and Bellefonte. Both have gradients of mostly 1 to 8 percent.

The Salem Plateau is adjacent to the Springfield Plateau but is lower in elevation. Elevations are about 650 to 1,000 feet above sea level. This is an area of gently sloping to steep stony mountainsides and outcrops of limestone.

Brief History of Boone County Agriculture

Early settlers in Boone County were mostly subsistence farmers. They cleared and farmed the small scattered areas on flood plains and gently sloping uplands where the soil is deep and contains few, if any, pebbles or stones. As roads were built and markets developed, the farmers produced cotton, fruit, grain, and livestock for cash sale. They also cut and sold the virgin hardwood timber.

From the 1930's to the 1950's, some farms were abandoned. On many farms, land use was changed from cultivated crops to pasture and meadow. Most of the nearly level to moderately steep soils are in tame pasture or meadow. The steep soils are mostly in low grade trees.

Today, livestock and poultry sales are the major source of income for Boone County agriculture producers. The 1997 Census of Agriculture reported that there were 1,259 farms in Boone County with an average farm size of 205 acres. The census reported that there were 31,259 beef cows, and a 62,465 head of total cattle and calves. According to the census, in 1997 there were 18,540,549 broilers (meat-type) chickens sold by Boone County poultry producers.

On average, the market value of agricultural products sold from Boone County farms in 1997 was \$47,583. This compares to a statewide county

average of \$121,388. The average farm net cash return from agricultural sales is \$1,756. This figure compares to a statewide county average of \$22,331.

Agricultural Production in Boone County

Beef cattle is the most predominately grown livestock species in Boone County. The cattle industry in the county mainly consists of cow-calf operations. Most calves are sold at weaning, but some are sold as stockers the following year. Beef cattle are produced on cool and warm season pasture plants with mineral and protein supplementation. They are fed grain and hay for only short periods in late winter.

Other livestock enterprises can also be found in Boone County including beef dairies, goat dairies, and sheep and goat operations. For information about livestock production, contact the Boone County Cooperative Extension Service or visit our web site at www.uaex.edu/agriculture.htm.

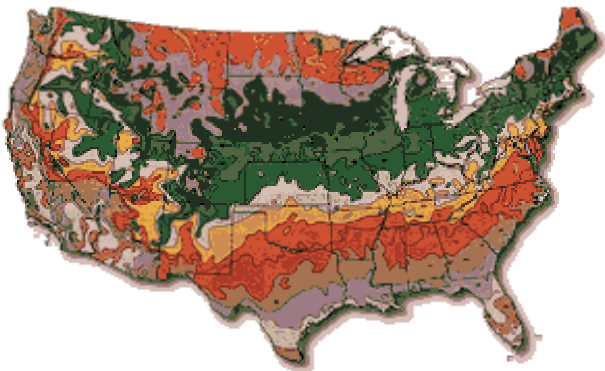
Fruit and vegetable production is also popular agricultural enterprise in Boone County. Commercial fruit and vegetable production requires intense management practices by producers. For information about commercial fruit or vegetable production and variety selection, contact the Boone County Cooperative Extension Service or visit our web site at www.uaex.edu/HG.htm.

Nothing makes country living complete like a flock of chickens in the back yard. However, before you decide to buy chickens, decide *why* you want them; this decision is important when selecting the breed that is right for you. There are basically three types of chickens— egg layers, meat-type chickens, and bantams. If you want primarily eggs, select breeds that are bred for egg production. If you want primarily fryers for the freezer, select meat type chickens such as a Cornish cross. If you want both, there are dual purpose breeds available. If you enjoy the experience of raising unique animals, you can select from ornamental breeds or the small bantam breeds.

Growing Horticultural Crops in Boone County

Hardiness zones are maps that help describe where various plants can be grown, and are based upon average minimum winter temperature. These maps are not perfect, but they do give a good approximation of how far north various plants can be grown. Boone County falls into zone 6, with an average temperature minimum at -10 to 0 degrees F.

Plants are given hardiness ratings based on observation and experience. It is not uncommon to find references which disagree on the appropriate hardiness ranking for a particular plant and it is often difficult to accurately predict what type of plant will or will not grow and thrive in Boone County.



*United States Department of Agriculture
Hardiness Zone Map*

This area of Arkansas is considered a transition zone, which means that it is often too hot for cool season varieties and too cold for warm season varieties. Microclimates caused by the diverse topography of the county often enable plants to thrive that normally would not. These microclimates may also cause one individual to be successful with a particular plant variety, while a neighbor a short distance away cannot grow the same variety under similar management.

Because of these conditions, it is important to seek the advice of others when choosing plant

varieties. Your County Extension Agent can provide you with information about varieties that will grow well in Boone County. One such information source is the Arkansas Extension Service's Home and Garden web page which can be accessed at www.uaex.edu/HG.htm. This web site provides information on a variety of plant materials that are suited for Arkansas.

Many soils found in Boone County may not be ideal for gardening and landscape plants. Some gardeners in Boone County have their soil brought in at great expense, or have "created" it themselves.

The first step to an improved soil is to find out what type of soil you are starting out with. Soil survey maps provide information for the type and uses of soils in the county. For help with soil survey maps, contact your County Extension Agent. Maps are available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Amending soils with plant food and lime is an important part of improving soils. Soil testing is one of the services provided by the Boone County Cooperative Extension Service, and is free of charge.

Free publications from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service are available on a variety of horticultural topics. To access these publications, visit the Boone County Cooperative Extension Service or visit our website at www.uaex.edu.

Where to Go From Here

For more information about agriculture and natural resources in Boone County, simply contact your Boone County Cooperative Extension Service Office for help. Contact information for the Boone County Cooperative Extension Service, along with other helpful resources can be found on the last page of this publication.



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
Cooperative Extension Service

What is the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service?

Our name includes the **University of Arkansas** because as a part of the Division of Agriculture, we are the University of Arkansas' link to everyone in the state.

Cooperative means that federal, state, and county governments, along with local citizens through a county Extension Council, cooperate to plan, develop, and finance educational programs.

Extension means that we extend the university and its resources as well as those of the United States Department of Agriculture to all Arkansans. We deliver information one-on-one or to groups. Our classroom is wherever we meet someone seeking information – in an office, meeting room, at home or in the field. Extension also brings you information through direct mail, demonstrations, tours, workshops, seminars, newsletters, publications, radio, television, newspapers, videos, satellite, and computer programs as well as via the Internet.

Service may be last in our name, but it is our first priority. We are educators offering programs and information in the areas of Agriculture, Families, Home and Garden, 4-H Youth education, and Natural Resources.

We are Agriculture – Improving profitability for farmers and agricultural businesses while protecting the environment.

We are Family and Consumer Sciences – Teaching families about eating right, spending smart, and living well.

We are 4-H Youth Development – Building tomorrow's leaders, Arkansas' youth.

We are Community Development – Helping leaders and their communities build a vibrant future.

We are a university without walls, with faculty in every county.

University of Arkansas, United States Department of Agriculture and County Governments Cooperating.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Agriculture Resources in Boone County

**University of Arkansas,
Division of Agriculture –
Boone County Cooperative
Extension Service**

P.O. Box 848
110B Industrial Park Road
Harrison, AR 72601
870-741-6168
www.uaex.edu

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Service Center**

Federal Building
402 North Walnut
Harrison, AR 72601
870-741-2307
www.usda.gov

Arkansas Forestry Commission

309 Watergate
Harrison, AR 72601
870-743-2210
www.forestry.state.ar.us

Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission

#1 Natural Resources Dr.
Little Rock, AR 72205
(501) 907-2400
www.arlpc.org

Arkansas State Plant Board

#1 Natural Resource Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205
501-225-1598
www.plantboard.org

**Arkansas Game & Fish Commission
North Central Regional Office**

Highway 56 N
Calico Rock, AR 72519
877-297-4331 (toll free)
[/www.agfc.com](http://www.agfc.com)

Buffalo River National Park

Federal Building
402 North Walnut
Harrison, AR 72601
870-741-5443
www.nps.gov/buff/