Compliance with Produce Safety Rule
The Food Safety and Modernization Act affects certain specialty crop growers. The Produce Safety Rule became effective January 26, 2016 and specifies crop and farm management practices intended to reduce the chance of food-borne illness. Please find (enclosed) a fact sheet from the US-FDA that summarizes compliance and income guidelines. Farms producing crops covered under the rule and generating over $25,000 (averaged over last 3 years) must eventually attend a training class and demonstrate that farm management practices adhere to FSMA standards. Farmer training opportunities will probably be offered in Arkansas beginning in 2017. The Benton County Extension Service is here to help as your farm moves toward full compliance with the Produce Safety Rule.

GAP Certification Cost-Share Assistance
Arkansas Farm to School, Winrock International, and the Benton County Extension Service will offer training opportunity for farms interested in attaining USDA Harmonized GAP certification. The first of 3 training sessions will be offered at the Benton County Extension office on November 4, from 8:00 to 4:30. The second and third sessions will be offered in early 2017, but dates and locations are not determined. Participants who attend all 3 trainings are eligible for cost-share assistance which will pay part or all fees for the required third party audit. Call our office to register for this class.

USDA Announces Easier Loan Process for Small Producers
The US Department of Agriculture announced the availability of a streamlined USDA loan process, with small farmers in mind. The program is called EZ Guarantee Loans and is advertised as using a streamlined application process. The intent is to help small, beginning, or underserved farmers apply for loans up to $100,000 from USDA-approved lenders. Loans may be used to purchase farmland or finance farm operations. Contact your local USDA-FSA office for more information.

Using Brassica Species as a Soil Fumigant
Some soil-borne pests may be managed using biofumigation. Brassicas include mustard, winter rape, and radishes, and all contain glucosinolates which release sulfur compounds during decomposition. Some research has shown that when established as cover crops and then incorporated, these plants may help suppress diseases including Verticillium and Rhizoctonia in susceptible vegetables. Similarly, their use has been shown to reduce pathogenic nematode populations to economic thresholds, particularly when used in conjunction with longer crop rotation strategies and synthetic nematicides. There is still much to learn about using these plants successfully as a biofumigant. While some studies have shown promising results in pest reduction, they are not necessarily consistent. Pest species, brassica species, soil characteristics, and soil environment can all affect efficacy of control.

Soil Testing and Lime Applications
If you haven’t performed soil testing on your cropland, fall is the best time of year to do it. Remember this is a free service, unless you want an organic matter or nitrate test ($5 each). If soil pH is too low for certain crops in your production system, lime applied this fall should raise pH by planting time next spring. Most vegetable crops prefer soil pH of 6.0 to 6.5. Irish and sweet potatoes do well in a slightly more acidic soil (5.7 to 6.2). Lime works slowly, plus wet soils and bad winter weather may not allow you to get a truck in the field during the winter. Remember to take several subsamples from each field, 6 to 8 inches deep. Mix subsamples in a bucket and collect a pint of mixed soil. Repeat the process for each field you test. Bring samples to the Extension office. We’ll mail them to the lab for testing, then mail you the results and recommendations.

Time to Treat for Raspberry Cane Borers
Look for raspberry crown borer eggs on undersides of very top leaves of blackberry or raspberry canes. Eggs hatch in late October to early November. Larvae overwinter under bark at base of canes. Apply Capture, Brigade, or Fanfare as a soil drench at base of plants through mid-November.
Firewood Quarantine

Emerald ash borer is a small green beetle that feeds on all ash species here in the Ozarks, and is responsible for widespread death of these trees across the Eastern US. The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry will be quarantining all movement of ash wood out of Delaware County, OK because the emerald ash borer has been identified there. Although there are currently no quarantines in northwest Arkansas counties, it is wise to assume the beetles are already here and residents should refrain from moving firewood as well. Prevention is the best management technique for this pest.

Winterizing Sprayers

Time spent in the fall preparing spray equipment for winter storage will be much appreciated next spring. Consider the following:

- Rinse and flush spray tank with clean water
- Add clear water to tank, remove screens and nozzles, activate sprayer, and flush entire system for several minutes
- Remove and clean screens and nozzles with soapy water and a stiff brush; loosely plug or cap any openings
- Remove check valves and gauges and store at room temperature; plug or cap all openings
- Add RV antifreeze to tank and activate sprayer allowing antifreeze to fill entire system; tighten all plugs and caps. Antifreeze keeps all parts moist and prevents freezing
- Put all parts in a secure container and store until time to reassemble next spring.
- Inspect and replace any worn or damaged nozzles while winterizing.