Other Livestock

The Extension Service assists the swine industry through educational program regarding waste management and 4-H swine projects.

The decrease in number and size of swine operations in Arkansas depicts the change in the swine industry from small and medium sized independents to large contract swine operations. Current estimates indicate 95 percent or more of the swine in Arkansas are grown under contract. The contracting company supplies the hogs, feed, fieldmen for herd health and production management and a market for the hogs. Major work with swine has involved providing Extension agents and independent operators with information on health, feed ingredients, ration formulation and facilities.

Arkansas inventory of all hogs and pigs on December 1, 2012, totaled 110,000 head, up 3 percent from December 1, 2011. Breeding hog inventory, at 63,000 head was up 5 percent from the previous year, and market hog inventory, at 47,000 head, was unchanged from the previous year. For the December 2011 – November 2012 period, the pig crop totaled 1,282,000 head, up 4 percent from the same time period the previous year. Sows farrowing during the period totaled 125,000 head, up 5 percent from the previous year. The average number of pigs saved per litter for December 2011 – November 2012 was 10.3 head, down slightly from last year.

Rabbits are another area Extension provides assistance. Rabbit production can be easily adapted to small farms and urban areas where other livestock farming is not practical. Rabbit meat is highly quality, all-white, appealing and tasty. Most domestic rabbits produced in this country, particularly in Arkansas, are harvested for human consumption. Some people raise rabbits entirely for pleasure as pets and as fancy animal, while other are interested in the quality production of pets for fur.