

Economic Contribution of Agriculture to the Arkansas Economy in 2024¹

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Agriculture is essential to the livelihood of many Arkansans and serves as one of the state's primary economic drivers. In 2024, Arkansas' economy was bolstered by 37,200 farms, 18.8 million acres of forests, 13.6 million acres of farmland and numerous agricultural product manufacturing firms (USDA, 2025; USDA Forest Service, 2026). Arkansas consistently ranks among the nation's top five producers of key commodities, including rice, broilers, catfish, cotton and turkeys, generating substantial revenue through the export of these and other goods. Beyond supplying food and related goods and services, the agriculture sector² plays a critical role in employment, supporting 238,680 jobs in Arkansas through direct, indirect and induced economic contributions. This fact sheet highlights the findings of a recent study that analyzes the total economic contribution of Arkansas' agriculture sector in

2024, measured by jobs, income and value added.³

Measuring Economic Activity of Arkansas' Agriculture Sector

The economic contribution of agriculture includes all economic activity generated within industries that make up the Agriculture Sector (e.g., agricultural production, agricultural processing, agriculture-related industries). This includes jobs supported, wages paid and value added to the state economy — a measure similar to State Gross Domestic Product (GDP). While these "direct" contributions are important, additional value is generated when Arkansas agribusinesses and related industries purchase inputs from local suppliers and when workers spend their earnings within the state. These additional contributions are described as indirect and induced effects, respectively. The sum of the direct, indirect, and

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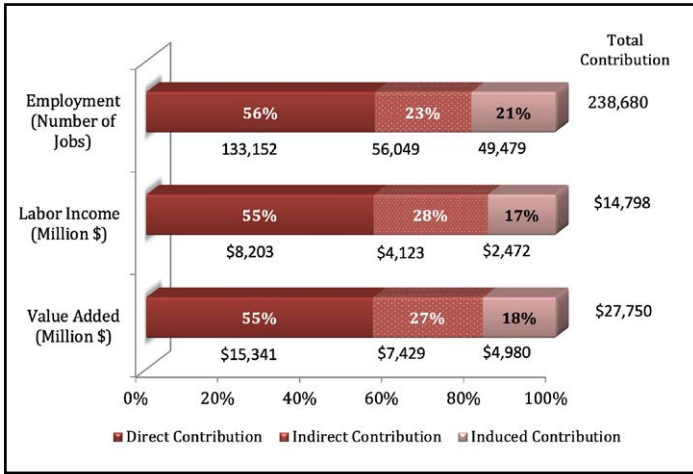
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¹This factsheet is an annually updated publication. To access previous editions and historical data, please visit <https://economic-impact-of-ag.uada.edu/arkansas/>.

²Agriculture includes timber production and forest product manufacturing in addition to agricultural products as defined in Economic Contribution of the Agricultural Sector to the Arkansas Economy in 2024 (Seo & Pullo, 2026).

³Value added is the sum of employee compensation, proprietary income, other property-type income, and indirect business taxes. The sum of value added for all industries is a measure of the size of the state economy.

Figure 1. The Agriculture Sector's Contribution to the Arkansas Economy in 2024



Source: IMPLAN, 2026. Note 1: Presented in 2024 dollars.
 Note 2: The sum of the values may not match exactly due to rounding.

induced contributions provides a more complete understanding of agriculture’s total economic contribution to the state economy.

Agriculture’s Contributions

In 2024, agriculture contributed \$27.8 billion⁴ in value to the Arkansas economy, making up 15 cents for every dollar of value added in the state. Agriculture supported around 238,680 jobs, which is one out of every seven jobs in Arkansas. These jobs also generated \$14.8 billion in labor income, accounting for 13.8 percent of the state’s total labor income. Direct effects originating from the agricultural sector accounted for the majority of contributions to employment (56 percent), labor income (55 percent) and value added (55 percent) generated by agriculture (Figure 1).

Contributions by Industry Type

The Agriculture Sector includes businesses involved in agricultural production, processing and related activities. Agricultural production involves the production and harvesting of agricultural commodities, including crop, livestock and forestry products. “Agricultural processing” refers to industries that take those agricultural commodities and process them into various products such as packaged food products, clothing, and furniture. Lastly, the agriculture-related category includes fishing, hunting and trapping, as well as support activities for agriculture and forestry.

In 2024, agricultural production supported 66,746 jobs, generated more than \$3.84 billion in labor income and contributed nearly \$8.0 billion in value added to the Arkansas economy. Agricultural processing accounted for 161,452 jobs, more than \$10.5 billion in labor income and an estimated \$19.2 billion in value added. Agriculture-related activities contributed 10,482 jobs, \$433 million in labor income and \$550 million in value added. (Table 1).

Overall, the agricultural processing industry accounted for the largest share of agriculture’s contribution to the state economy, followed by agricultural production and agriculture-related industries. Agricultural processing generated 67.6 percent of agriculture’s employment, 71.1 percent of labor income, and 69.2 percent of value added, with poultry processing being the primary economic contributor within the processing sector.

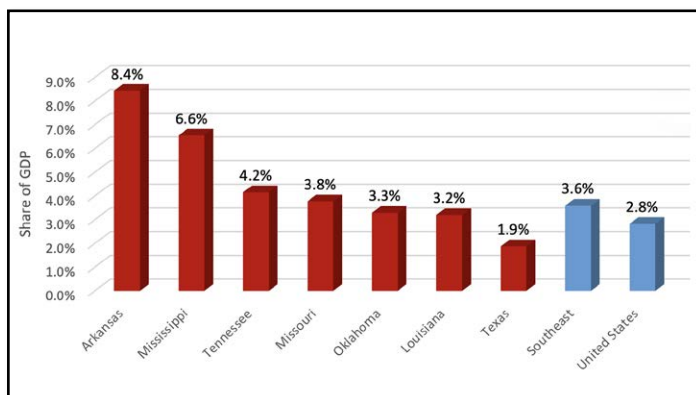
Table 1. Total Economic Contribution of Agriculture by Industry Type, 2024

Industry Type	Employment (jobs)	Labor Income (million \$)	Value Added (million \$)
Production	66,746	\$3,840	\$8,011
Processing	161,452	\$10,525	\$19,190
Ag Related	10,482	\$433	\$550
Total Contribution	238,680	14,798	27,750

Source: IMPLAN, 2026, Note 1: Presented in 2024 dollars. Note 2: The sum of the values may not match exactly due to rounding.

⁴Contributions are reported in nominal 2024 dollars.

Figure 2. Agriculture's Share of Total State GDP, 2024



Source: USDC BEA, 2026 Note 1: Represents the direct contribution of agricultural production, processing, and ag-related industries. Wholesale and retail activities are excluded. Note 2: The sum of the values may not match exactly due to rounding.

How Does Arkansas Compare?

The direct contribution of agricultural production, processing and related industries to the state GDP⁵ is higher in Arkansas than in all surrounding states.⁶ This share also surpasses the averages for both the Southeast states and the nation (Figure 2).

This represents a share of GDP from Arkansas' Agriculture Sector that is:

- 4.50 times greater than in Texas
- 2.64 times greater than in Louisiana
- 2.57 times greater than in Oklahoma
- 2.24 times greater than in Tennessee
- 2.03 times greater than in Missouri
- 1.29 times greater than in Mississippi
- 2.35 times greater than in the Southeast region
- 2.99 times greater than in the US as a whole

Conclusion

Agriculture plays a crucial role in the Arkansas economy, providing jobs and income, as well as contributing 14.6 percent to the state's value added. For many years, agriculture has accounted for a higher proportion of Arkansas' GDP than in any surrounding state, the Southeastern region, or the United States as a whole. As such, the continued strength of agriculture is essential to the social and economic well-being of Arkansas communities, as well as to the infrastructure and services that enhance residents' quality of life.

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⁵ GDP by state is the market value of goods and services produced by the labor and property located in a state. GDP does not factor in the impact of subsidies and taxes on products, which are presented in the previous value-added estimates.

⁶ Calculations based on the percent of the direct contribution of the Agriculture Sector to the state GDP. This includes value generated by agricultural production, processing, and ag-related industries, but excludes contributions of associated wholesale and retail industries.

⁷ The Southeast is defined by BEA to include the states AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, and WV, and is not the sum of Arkansas' contiguous states listed in the table.

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