



**WINROCK**  
INTERNATIONAL



Winrock International

Regional Economic Development Strategies

## **Northeast Arkansas Regional Economic Development Strategy**

Economies change, natural disasters strike and rural communities are left with the damage of limited resources and little hope.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, Winrock's Northeast Arkansas Regional Economic Development Strategy will develop a set of tactics designed to retain jobs, increase income, and increase the number of jobs in the agriculture sector of a seven-county region in northeast Arkansas, including Clay, Greene, Craighead, Mississippi, Poinsett, Cross and Crittenden Counties.

The strategy will determine how the economy will react if farmers were to move from more traditional row crops to dedicated energy or specialty crops that may be more resistant to weather changes and natural disasters.

It is imperative that farmers continue to innovate, but it is also necessary for community leaders to understand what one major crop change could do to the ancillary farming businesses.

### **Objectives & Activities**

Over the course of the project, Winrock and the Delta Center for Economic Development at Arkansas State University will conduct a variety of assessments and analyses on the current agricultural

financial system in the region, and determine how crop diversification can contribute to long-term stability in the region.

Winrock will focus on the following activities:

- An analysis of farmers who grow traditional row crops (corn, rice, wheat, soybeans), including calculations for current subsidy and disaster payments
- An analysis of specialty food crops in the area
- Identification of challenges and opportunities for bioenergy and food processing facilities
- Identification and analyses of barriers farmers face, including technical issues, production risks, and cultural, financial, and profitability concerns
- Developing approaches to best utilize opportunities in the following areas: awareness and education programs, state and federal incentives, and strategies for capitalizing projects.

The Northeast Arkansas Regional Economic Development Strategy will provide a comprehensive view of crop diversification on local economies and is well positioned for replication throughout the Mississippi Delta region.

This region has long experienced natural and economic disasters. For continued growth, regions must be aware of how crop diversification can create jobs, increase income and change lives.

***For more information about the Northeast Arkansas Regional Economic Development Strategy please contact Donna Uptagrafft at (501) 280-3078 or [duptagrafft@winrock.org](mailto:duptagrafft@winrock.org).***

Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.



**WINROCK**  
INTERNATIONAL

#### **Principal Offices**

2101 Riverfront Drive | Little Rock, AR 72202-1748 | T 501.280.3000 | F 501.280.3090  
2121 Crystal Drive, Suite 500 | Arlington, VA 22202 | T 703.302.6500 | F 703.302.6512

[www.winrockusprograms.org](http://www.winrockusprograms.org)

© 2009 All Rights Reserved