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**First box of Bradley County tomatoes delivered to extension office**

By Mary Hightower

U of A System Division of Agriculture

**Fast Facts**

* First box of tomatoes delivered to Bradley County Extension Office
* River and Lynn Grice deliver box of Red Mountain tomatoes

(255 words)

(Newsrooms — With art <https://flic.kr/p/2m3wSwx> )

WARREN, Ark. — The 2021 season for one of Arkansas’ favorite summer treats is off and running now that the first box of tomatoes has been delivered to the Bradley County Cooperative Extension Service office.

“The first box of tomatoes for 2021 was brought in by River Grice, a fifth-generation farmer in Warren,” John Gavin said on Friday. Gavin is Bradley County extension staff chair for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “River and his father, Lynn Grice, produce approximately 16 acres of tomatoes and other produce that include tomato varieties of Red Mountain, Purple Cherokee, Bradley, and Pink Girl.”

Gavin said the Grice family also raise watermelons, cantaloupe, and peppers.

The first box contained Red Mountain tomatoes, which will go on display at the Bradley County Chamber of Commerce during the Pink Tomato Festival. This year is the 65th annual festival that celebrating the county’s famous pink tomatoes. Events surrounding the festival kicked off June 5, with the Tour de Tomato Bike tour, pageants and a baggo tournament. All are leading up to the events of June 11-12, which include a tomato-packing contest, a tomato eating contest, music and a fireworks show.

**Wet weather**

Arkansas has had its share of cool, wet weather this spring.

“Tomatoes are about one to two weeks late this year because of the weather,” Gavin said. “It has been a good year for zucchini, yellow squash and cabbage but the cool and wet weather has delayed the tomatoes.”

In 2015, Arkansas produced 1.82 million pounds of tomatoes, according to the 2020 Arkansas Agriculture profile.

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The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture’s mission is to strengthen agriculture, communities, and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices. Through the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Cooperative Extension Service, the Division of Agriculture conducts research and extension work within the nation’s historic land grant education system.

The Division of Agriculture is one of 20 entities within the University of Arkansas System. It has offices in all 75 counties in Arkansas and faculty on five system campuses.

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