

GOOD MANUFACTURING PRACTICES CERTIFICATION FUELS  
EXPANSION

**ABOUT OUACHITA FARMS.** Ouachita Farms is a consumer goods brand founded in 2019 by FarmerBlox LLC, with operations in Arkansas and Texas. The company's hemp-derived products are available on hundreds of retail shelves throughout the Mid-South region. Ouachita Farms emphasizes infused relaxation food and beverage products, along with a line of full spectrum wellness items such as oils and capsules.

**THE CHALLENGE.** The company needed to obtain a Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) Certification to proactively prepare for upcoming Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation changes in the hemp industry and to boost its competitive edge in the market.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Ouachita Farms partnered with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) and Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions (AMS), part of the MEP National Network™, for assistance with GMP certification. This collaboration took place early in the pandemic, with support from their partner, the National Science Foundation (NSF). The project began with a management meeting to define key objectives for implementing GMP. An NSF expert conducted a GMP pre-audit, shared best practices, and identified areas for improvement. Ouachita Farms' project team then designed and implemented changes in their daily operations based on these insights. The effectiveness was confirmed through a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audit, and Ouachita Farms successfully achieved certification. Since completing the GMP GAP audit, Ouachita Farms has expanded into Texas and launched a hemp-infused seltzer brand, Lark, which now has broad distribution across the U.S.

"This entire process really took our manufacturing team to the next step in preparing for hemp products to eventually be considered a dietary supplement by the FDA, and when that time comes, we want to be prepared. Working with the AEDC and NSF was such a positive experience for us and really opened our eyes to what type of training and support is available for small businesses like Ouachita Farms."

-David Owen, CEO

## RESULTS



**\$9.6M** in increased/retained sales



**19** increased/retained jobs



**\$1.8M** in cost savings



**\$200K** in new investment

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