



## **Governor's Executive Budget Proposal Includes Funding for Key Arizona Department of Agriculture Initiatives**

### *Funding for food safety initiatives within the Arizona Department of Agriculture*

Phoenix, AZ — Today Governor Hobbs released her FY 2026 Executive Budget, which funds critical programs and efforts that protect Arizona's food supply and public health.

**"We are very pleased to have Governor Hobbs' support for our food safety efforts as our meat and poultry inspectors and scientists at the State Agricultural Laboratory work tirelessly to protect the public and Arizona's food producing industries from the dangers of foodborne illness," said Arizona Department of Agriculture Director Paul Brierley.**

Arizona Department of Agriculture initiatives funded in the budget proposal include:

- \$127,000 for a new food safety scientist: Food contamination can pose a significant threat to the health of individuals and families. To better protect Arizona's food supply from contamination and facilitate detection of foodborne illness outbreaks, the Executive Budget includes \$127,000 ongoing from the General Fund for a new food safety scientist at the Arizona Department of Agriculture. The Department tests meat, dairy and pet food for microbial contamination. Additionally, AZDA performs forensic analysis for chemical contamination and tests feed, fertilizer, seed, hemp and pesticide products to assure quality standards are met. The Department is seeking accreditation to perform high-level testing in the event of an outbreak, equivalent to that done by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This will allow Arizona to rapidly and effectively respond to contamination or foodborne illness outbreaks without having to wait for confirmation testing by the FDA. With this new accreditation and the additional position, the Department will be better equipped to protect public health.
- \$119,300 ongoing and \$45,000 one-time from the General Fund to expand State inspections of meat-processing facilities: This funding will provide the Department with enhanced capacity and help meat-processing plants in the State to expand operations and open new facilities.