



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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**Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson and MDAC Celebrate National Ag Day
*Governor Reeves Signs Proclamation Declaring March 21, 2023, Ag Day in Mississippi***

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce celebrated National Ag Day at the Mississippi State Capitol, featuring two cow milking contests. Governor Tate Reeves signed a proclamation declaring Ag Day in the state of Mississippi.

“We celebrate National Ag Day and Ag Day in Mississippi today to shine a light on the truth that all of our food comes from the farm,” said Commissioner Gipson. “It’s important that we support our local farmers. We have fewer farmers today than ever before, but agriculture remains strong and is Mississippi’s largest industry. Every meal that we enjoy began on a farm.”

Local television news reporters Kayla Thompson with WJTV and Morgan Harris with WLBT competed in the first milking contest. Kayla Thompson won the round after milking a total of 1.5 cups of milk from Sophia the cow. The second contest featured Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson and his wife, Mississippi’s First Lady of Agriculture Leslie Gipson. Leslie Gipson was the overall winner with a total of 3.5 cups also milked from Sophia the cow. “I must confess I’m not surprised that Leslie beat me fair and square in the milking contest!” said Commissioner Gipson. The dairy cows are owned by Beason Family Farms of Philadelphia, who also provided complimentary chocolate milk to guests. View full Ag Day festivities at [link](#) and the proclamation at [link](#).

After he signed the proclamation, Governor Reeves said, “Mississippi farmers are the backbone of our state’s economy. They’re the reason why the agriculture industry contributed over \$9 billion to Mississippi’s economy in 2022. Our state is a global leader in the agriculture industry, and I was proud to proclaim today as Agriculture Day in Mississippi. If you see a farmer, thank them for feeding Mississippi and America.”

National Ag Day was started in 1973 by the Agriculture Council of America as an effort to encourage every American to understand how food and fiber products are produced, to appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products, to value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy, and to acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food and fiber industry. To learn more about National Agriculture Day, visit www.agday.org.

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Photos attached.



Local television news reporters Kayla Thompson with WJTV and Morgan Harris with WLBT competed in the first milking contest. Kayla Thompson won the round after milking a total of 1.5 cups of milk from Sophia the cow. Pictured L-R: Morgan Harris, WLBT Reporter; Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson; and Kayla Thompson, WJTV Reporter.



The second contest featured Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson and his wife, Mississippi's First Lady of Agriculture Leslie Gipson. Leslie Gipson was the overall winner with a total of 3.5 cups also milked from Sophia the cow.



Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson joined Governor Tate Reeves as he signed a proclamation declaring March 21, 2023, Ag Day in the state of Mississippi.



Pictured L-R: Sy Sullivan, FFA Representative; Jon Tyler Wells, FFA Representative; Commissioner Andy Gipson; Chuck Younger, Senate Ag Chairman; Carla Taylor, Member of Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation's Board of Directors, District 1, and Owner of Taylor Jersey Farm in Booneville; Neil Whaley, Mississippi Senator and Member of Agriculture Committee; Governor Tate Reeves; Landon Beason; Shelby Beason, Owner of Beason Family Farms in Philadelphia; Marlo Beason, Owner of Beason Family Farms in Philadelphia; Grant Goree, FFA Representative; Ayden Wolken, FFA Representative; Clint Ladner, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation's Dairy Commodity Coordinator; and Andy Berry, Executive Vice President of the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association.