



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 25, 2023

Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
(601) 359-1163 / cell: (662) 312-5897
Paige@mdac.ms.gov

Hannah East, Marketing Specialist
(601) 359-1179
HannahE@mdac.ms.gov

Commissioner Andy Gipson Announces 2023 Mississippi Ag Youth Council Members
Carroll, Forrest, Hancock, Hinds, Jasper, Jones, Newton, Pontotoc, Quitman, Rankin, Simpson and
Tippah Counties Represented

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the members of the 2023-2024 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council. High school senior, Byron Lopez of Tippah County, was among the 14 student finalists chosen to serve on the 2023 Ag Youth Council. Byron, son of Wendy and Byron Lopez, Sr., attends Pine Grove High School in Ripley.

The other high school seniors selected include Amelia and Ava DuBard of Carroll County; Delainey Walker of Forrest County; Claire Necaise of Hancock County; Dalton Barnes of Hinds County; Anna Laura Haden of Jasper County; Janna Claire Ishee of Jones County; Mary Ellen Moore of Newton County; Grace Randle and Kye Webb of Pontotoc County; William Walker of Quitman County; Jazabreun Spann of Rankin County; and Ayden Wolken of Simpson County. Members were chosen through an application process and were interviewed by a committee of representatives from the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC).

“I want to congratulate the fourteen student finalists who have been selected to serve on this year’s Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council,” said Commissioner Gipson. “Our agency began this youth council in 2021 to provide opportunities for our young people to make unique connections and learn about our state’s diverse agriculture industry. Since then, we have seen numerous students gain valuable experience, life skills and industry exposure before going on to further their education and acquire jobs in ag-related fields. These students are the future of our ag workforce, and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is committed to supporting this next generation of leaders.”

The 2023 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council is comprised of 14 high school seniors with an interest in agriculture. The goal of this council is to expose the students to a variety of agriculture career fields and to teach them how to advocate for various aspects of the agriculture industry. Council members will visit agricultural companies and organizations, learn about the legislative process and how it affects the

agriculture industry, hold discussions with industry professionals and hone career-development skills. Council members will serve for one year, from August 2023 to June 2024, and attend a minimum of four meetings at the MDAC headquarters located in Jackson.

For more information about the Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council, visit www.mdac.ms.gov/mayc or contact Gayle Clark at gayle@mdac.ms.gov or Emily Stovall at emilys@mdac.ms.gov.

###

Photo attached.



Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the members of the 2023-2024 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council. High school senior, Byron Lopez of Tippah County, was among the 14 student finalists chosen to serve on the 2023 Ag Youth Council.