



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

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson Announces Launch of Wild Hog Control Program Youth Trapping Corps**

**STATE FAIRGROUNDS, Miss.** – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the launch of the Wild Hog Control Program (WHCP) Youth Trapping Corps. The Youth Trapping Corps is an expansion of WHCP and is designed to educate and professionally develop student members of FFA.

This new program is a partnership among the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC), the Mississippi FFA Association and Wildlife Dominion Management, LLC. Commissioner Gipson was joined by Umesh Sanjanwala, State Director for U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith; Jack Robertson, Co-Owner of Wildlife Dominion Management, LLC; Kramer Sowell, Agriculture Teacher at Brandon High School; and Don Brazil, CEO of the Foundation for Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks.

“Last year at this time, I announced our partnership with Mississippi FFA to expand our Wild Hog Control Program to include a youth education and professional development component, the Youth Trapping Corps. Today, I am proud to report this program has been fully funded through a federal grant, and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is working with 25 schools across the state to implement the Youth Trapping Corps,” said Commissioner Gipson. “This funding opportunity was made possible by U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith. I appreciate Senator Hyde-Smith’s efforts in securing the funds needed to get this program off the ground. Her continued support of agriculture and Mississippi’s youth will help ensure the success of the Youth Trapping Corps.”

This first-of-its-kind program will provide FFA students around the state the opportunity to offer wild hog trapping services while gaining valuable skills and work-based learning experiences. Under the WHCP umbrella, FFA members will be trained on how to trap wild hogs, how to interact with landowners and land managers, how to develop a business plan, and how to interact with agriculture and natural resources professionals. Under the guidance of MDAC and their respective teachers, FFA members will work with local private land managers to trap wild hogs where needed.

The grant funding will be used by teachers to purchase the most effective wild hog trapping equipment and associated supplies to be used by their students. Additionally, funding can be used by teachers to purchase equipment and supplies that will allow their students to build their own traps. This will provide students with hands-on training related to welding and fabrication. These hands-on skills will be valuable to students when they pursue employment and careers in the future.

“The Wild Hog Control Program is MDAC’s response to the threat of the invasive non-native feral hogs. Through this new partnership with FFA, now the Wild Hog Control Program is also part of the solution to address Mississippi’s workforce development needs,” said Commissioner Gipson.

To learn more about the Wild Hog Control Program, including the WHCP Youth Trapping Corps and the WHCP Cost Share Program, visit [www.mdac.ms.gov/whcp](http://www.mdac.ms.gov/whcp). To view the press conference in its entirety, visit <https://youtu.be/wjT9GCu0XHI>.

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**Photo attached.**



**Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson announced the launch of the Wild Hog Control Program (WHCP) Youth Trapping Corps, which is designed to educate and professionally develop student members of FFA. Pictured L-R: Jack Robertson, Co-Owner of Wildlife Dominion Management, LLC; Harold Leonard, Nuisance Wildlife Specialist at MDAC; Chris McDonald, Director of Federal and Environmental Affairs at MDAC; Don Brazil, CEO of the Foundation for Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks; Umesh Sanjanwala, State Director for U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith; Andy Gipson, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce; Kramer Sowell, Agriculture Teacher at Brandon High School; Hunter Robinson, FFA Student at Brandon High School; and Dr. Bryan Marshall, Principal of Brandon High School.**