



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

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Agriculture Commissioner Andy Gipson Addresses State Economic Leaders Sharing Solutions for Mississippi's Future**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Today, Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson addressed state economic leaders at Mississippi Hobnob hosted by the Mississippi Economic Council. Commissioner Gipson highlighted successes and challenges to agriculture and commerce, while providing seven practical solutions for the Future of Mississippi.

“I and our team at MDAC believe in getting things done; we have a proven record of doing just that,” said Commissioner Gipson.

Commissioner Gipson outlined some key successes of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) during his administration. Highlighted MDAC successes included:

- MDAC consolidated the Mississippi State Fairgrounds and Mississippi Farmers Market into a single agency resulting in more efficient operations utilizing less taxpayer dollars.
- The Mississippi State Fairgrounds continues to hold successful and safe Mississippi State Fairs.
- The Mississippi State Fairgrounds hosted multiple back-to-back record-breaking Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeos.
- Processing capacity for beef and pork has tripled due to investments in the construction of new and expansion of existing local meat processing facilities in the state.
- Access to local foods has expanded through the Genuine MS® program, development of new local food initiatives and the expansion of farmers markets to almost every Mississippi county.
- Markets for Mississippi's agricultural goods and forestry products have increased as a result of MDAC's international trade efforts and strong partnership with the Southern U.S. Trade Association (SUSTA).
- Inbound and outbound trade missions hosted by MDAC's recently-created Timber Market Development division have resulted in the creation of new market opportunities for Mississippi's tree farmers and forestry industry.
- MDAC launched the nation's first Wild Hog Control Program led by a state agricultural agency, which includes the nation's first student-led youth trapping program.
- MDAC has executed strategic capital improvements at the State Fairgrounds and the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum.

Commissioner Gipson also addressed current significant challenges facing America including the suffering national economy; supply chain and inflation impacts on food supply; energy depletion; changing weather patterns causing drought and historically low levels of the Mississippi River; labor shortages and brain drain; healthcare crisis; and moral decay, while emphasizing the need for planning for the future.

“Rather than being prisoners of the past or paralyzed by the present, we must be planning for our future. There is a reason every automobile has a great big windshield in front. If you’re not looking ahead to the future, you are forced to look into the rearview mirror or sideways, and either one will land you in the ditch,” said Commissioner Gipson. “We must be constantly looking toward the future.”

Commissioner Gipson emphasized local agriculture being the solution to many challenges. “Agriculture is the single largest sector of Mississippi’s economy. I am 100% convinced that agriculture holds the answer to most of the challenges we face,” said Commissioner Gipson.

Commissioner Gipson shared seven real world solutions for Mississippi’s future: first, we must cultivate and increase local food production coupled with food processing, storage and distribution addressed in the proposed Strategic Agriculture Facilities Expansion (S.A.F.E.) Plan; second, we must take an ‘all the above approach’ to energy policy supporting various energy sources and capitalizing on carbon credits through Mississippi’s forests and farms; third, we must implement a Comprehensive Commerce Transportation Initiative that includes all modes of transportation - rivers, rails and ports - to move all our products to market; fourth, we must strategically preserve, recharge and strengthen Mississippi’s water resources and aquifers; fifth, we must combat ‘brain drain’ by investing in youth, the future leaders of Mississippi, through programs like 4-H, FFA, schools and vocational education; sixth, we must revamp healthcare to encompass eating healthy foods grown by local farmers through programs like food prescriptions at the same time that we create private competition within health insurance; and seventh, by living out the culture and work ethic of our farm families, we must strengthen our moral base and revive our culture to have a stronger Mississippi.

“The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time. We have the opportunity to make daily decisions like planting seeds. Agriculture is not only Mississippi’s past – it is the key answer to Mississippi’s future success,” concluded Commissioner Gipson.

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**Photo attached.**



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