

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
**AGRICULTURE  
& COMMERCE**

FISCAL YEAR 2023

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

Growing A Better Tomorrow







# Table of Contents

Message from the Commissioner.....	1
Agency Overview.....	2
Organizational Chart.....	3
Mississippi Agriculture Industry Overview.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
Market Development.....	6
• Genuine MS®.....	10
• Mississippi Farmers Market.....	12
• County Correspondents Program.....	13
Timber Commerce.....	14
Agriculture Workforce Education, Outreach, and Development.....	16
Wild Hog Control Program.....	18
Farmers Market Nutrition Program.....	20
Mississippi Agriculture and Livestock Theft Bureau.....	21
Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum.....	22
Mississippi State Fairgrounds.....	24
Bureau of Plant Industry.....	26
• Plant Pest Programs.....	27
• Pesticide Program.....	28
• Seed Program and State Seed Laboratory.....	30
• Feed, Fertilizer, Lime, and Soil Amendments Program.....	31
Regulatory Services.....	32
• Consumer Protection.....	33
• Federal and State Inspection Program.....	34
• Petroleum Products Inspection.....	35
• Meat Inspection.....	36
• Weights and Measures.....	37
• Metrology Lab.....	38
• Grain Dealers and Warehouses.....	39
Legal Division.....	40
Information Management Division.....	41
Revenues and Expenditures.....	43



# A Message from Commissioner Andy Gipson

Agriculture, the state's largest industry, is the backbone of the economy and the lifeblood of rural communities throughout the State of Mississippi. This year, Mississippi farmers produced over \$8.7 billion in agricultural commodities. Farmers faced challenges including a spring freeze followed by the most severe drought our state has faced in decades. Through it all, farmers and ranchers remained resilient, continuing to provide food, clothing, and shelter to the world.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) touches the lives of all Mississippians. MDAC works to ensure you get what you pay for at the gas pump and the grocery store and you have access to a safe, affordable, and adequate food supply.

I am proud of the Department's accomplishments this year. Our staff implemented new programs and strategies to expand marketing opportunities for agricultural commodities. I traveled to the Netherlands on a USDA Agribusiness Trade Mission to promote products including sweet potatoes and timber. We launched a new local food initiative, the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program, which provides funds to Feeding America Food Banks covering all 82 counties to purchase food from local farmers and food producers for distribution to underserved communities. This program creates new market opportunities for Mississippi farmers, while providing food to those that need it the most.

Speaking of those in need, this past year, we utilized our resources to serve citizens in their greatest time of need. During the water crisis in Jackson, the Mississippi State Fairgrounds served as an emergency State Staging Area for water distribution and provided water from its well system to assist the public. Following the disastrous tornadoes across the Delta and Northeast Mississippi in March, MDAC partnered with other state agencies to collect and organize donations for storm victims at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds.

I am extremely proud that we accomplished this and more with 64 percent of our expenditures coming from special and federal funds rather than state funds. You can read more details in this 2023 Annual Report. As you read, I hope you gain a better understanding of the diverse role MDAC plays in promoting and supporting the agriculture industry, as well as protecting consumers.

You can learn more about your Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce by visiting our website at [www.mdac.ms.gov](http://www.mdac.ms.gov).

Sincerely,



Andy Gipson, Commissioner



In addition to overseeing the responsibilities of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, duties of the Commissioner include leadership through service on the following boards:

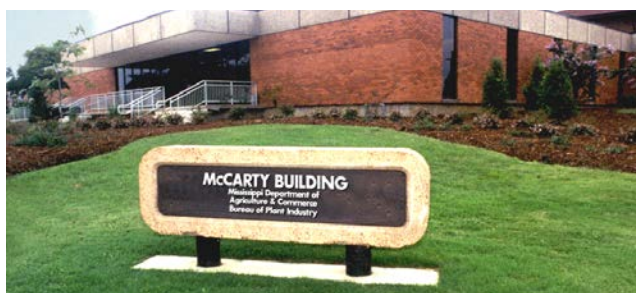
- Mississippi Board of Animal Health
- Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Permit Board
- Mississippi Land, Water, and Timber Resources Board, Co-Chairman
- Mississippi Egg Marketing Board
- Southern U.S. Trade Association, Immediate Past President
- State Seed Board
- State Soil & Water Conservation Committee



# MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & COMMERCE

## Mission

The mission of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is to support and apply necessary regulations to agricultural-related businesses within the state and to promote Mississippi's products throughout both the state and the rest of the world for the benefit of all Mississippi citizens.



Mississippi Department of  
Agriculture and Commerce  
121 North Jefferson Street  
Jackson, MS 39201  
601-359-1100

Mississippi Agriculture  
and Forestry Museum  
1150 Lakeland Drive  
Jackson, MS 39216  
601-432-4500

Bureau of  
Plant Industry  
705 Stone Blvd  
Mississippi State,  
MS 39762  
662-325-3390

Mississippi Farmers  
Market  
929 High Street  
Jackson, MS 39202  
601-354-6573

Mississippi State  
Fairgrounds  
1207 Mississippi Street  
Jackson, MS 39202  
601-961-4000



@msdeptofag



@MSDeptofAg



Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce

Contact MDAC  
P: 601-359-1100  
[www.mdac.ms.gov](http://www.mdac.ms.gov)

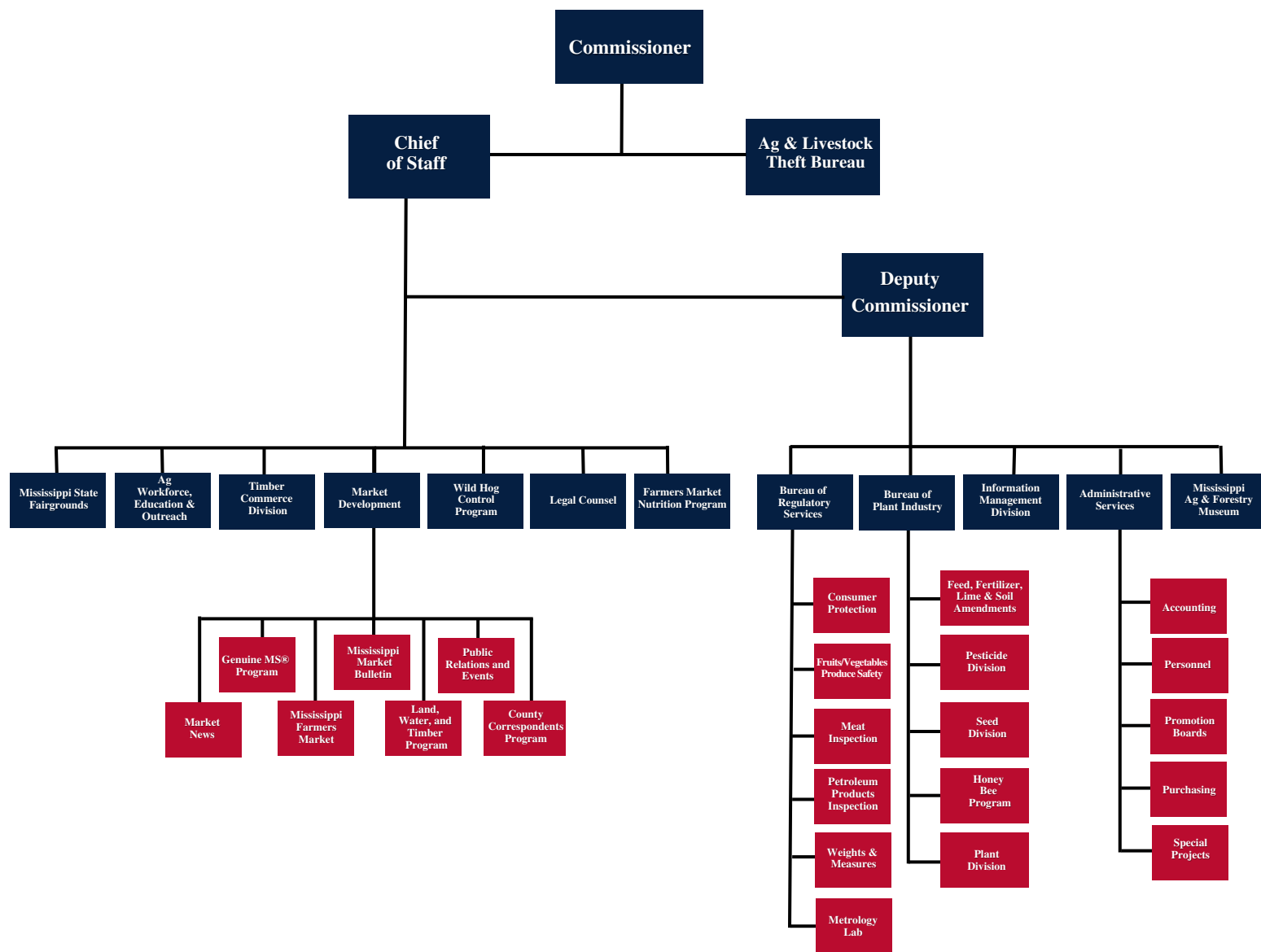




MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
**AGRICULTURE  
& COMMERCE**



**MDAC Organizational Chart**



Administration  
Andy Gipson - Commissioner  
Brian Perry - Chief of Staff  
Hayes Patrick - Deputy Commissioner



# Mississippi Agriculture Industry Overview

**\$8.76 Billion\*** of crops and commodities produced in Mississippi in 2023

\*farm-gate value



## FARMS

34,100 in Mississippi



## ACREAGE

10.3 Million  
farm acres  
in Mississippi



## CATFISH

32,900  
water acres of productions  
in Mississippi

## FOREST

19 Million forest acres in  
Mississippi



## NATIONALLY

Mississippi ranks in the top  
25 nationally in 14 ag  
commodities



## WORKFORCE

17.4% of the state's workforce is  
employed by an industry directly  
or indirectly related to agriculture



### Mississippi Top 10

Mississippi's Top Commodities Based on Cash Receipts



Source: Mississippi State University. (2023 Data)

### Mississippi Ag Exports

#### Top Trading Partners

1. China
2. Canada
3. Pakistan
4. Mexico
5. Bangladesh

#### Top Traded Commodities

1. Cotton  
\$514.1 Million
2. Forest Products  
\$233.3 Million
3. Poultry Meat & Meat Products  
\$211.7 Million
4. Bakery Goods, Cereals & Pasta  
\$27 Million
5. Other Feeds & Fodders  
\$26.9 Million

**\$1.1 Billion** total value of Mississippi exports in 2022.

Source: USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service, Global Agricultural Trade System Online. (2022 Trade Data)



# Executive Summary

MDAC FY 2023 Annual Report (July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023)

State law tasks the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) to promote agriculture; to manage invasive species; to register and regulate pesticides, seeds and fertilizers; to ensure a fair marketplace in pricing and commercial scales; to inspect motor fuel; to protect the public's food supply; and to engage in additional state and federal regulatory roles. The mission of MDAC is to support and apply necessary regulations to agricultural-related businesses within the state and to promote Mississippi's products throughout both the state and the rest of the world for the benefit of all Mississippi citizens.

MDAC impacts the daily lives of all Mississippians. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce ensures equity in the consumer marketplace by inspecting petroleum pumps at gas stations, checking food labels in grocery stores and retail establishments, and inspecting scales grocery stores, truck stops, stockyards, and railways. It supports the state's ag producers by promoting Mississippi products and developing marketing opportunities for these products. It protects farmers, ranchers, and ag producers statewide by investigating agriculture-related thefts and enforcing laws pertaining to agribusiness and livestock brands. During the past year alone, MDAC's Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau (MALTB) investigated 193 cases with a reported value of over \$3,894,125 and recovered \$2,188,405 in stolen property. Through the efforts of the MALTB, Mississippians recouped livestock, farm equipment and timber profits illegally acquired from private lands.

MDAC's Bureau of Plant Industry and Bureau of Regulatory Services conducted inspections statewide to ensure compliance with state and federal laws. MDAC inspectors responded to consumer complaints, resulting in corrective action, education, and a return to compliance.

MDAC registered 15,571 pesticide products for sale; inspected more than 58,607 petroleum devices; tested more than 4,405 active weighing devices and scales; issued over 2,162 retail food establishment licenses; and inspected 31 million pounds of red meat and 52 million pounds of poultry this fiscal year.

Through the agency's Market Development Division, more than \$687,000 were distributed through grant funds provided by the United States Department of Agriculture. The Market Development Division also manages several promotional programs specifically designed to increase awareness of Mississippi's ag products and agricultural-related businesses. International trade, farm-to-school, agritourism and farmers market registries, livestock and grain market news, online market portals, and other outreach efforts remain a focus for the agency. Part of these efforts include expanding the Genuine MS® program and the *Mississippi Market Bulletin*.

Working closely with each division at MDAC, the Information Management Division (IMD) plays a critical role by both providing technical support to agency employees and data and information to the public. Through online webpages, social media applications, and drone and photography services, IMD ensures important information is readily available to the public on behalf of the agency and its branches including the Mississippi State Fairgrounds and Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum. This vital service provides a direct line of communication between the consumer and local farmer to one of the largest agencies in the state.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce's 220 employees work from offices in Jackson, at Mississippi State University, at Alcorn State University, in Sardis, in Biloxi, and on-the-road to promote Mississippi agriculture and protect Mississippi's markets to ensure fair commerce.

# Market Development

***The Market Development Division promotes Mississippi agriculture and the state's agricultural products across the state, nation, and world.***

The Market Development Division is dedicated to promoting Mississippi's agriculture commodities and the farmers and ranchers who produce them. This is accomplished through participation in trade shows, conferences, fairs, international trade, presentations to schools and civic organizations, promotion of local farmers markets, connecting with other agricultural organizations or commodity groups, and various other communication outlets. The Market Development Division consists of three main program areas: communications/outreach, market development programs, and grants and cost-share programs.

## **Communications/Outreach**

The Market Development Division serves as the communications and outreach arm of the Department and is responsible for media and public relations. Communication to the public is achieved through social media, press releases, videos, and various publications including the *Mississippi Market Bulletin*, *Mississippi Agriculture* magazine, the MDAC Ag Matters e-newsletter, Upcoming Events e-newsletter, and Livestock and Grain Marketing News.

The Market Development Division publishes the *Mississippi Market Bulletin*, a buy/sell newspaper for farmers to advertise farm and agricultural items such as equipment, land, and livestock. *The Mississippi Market Bulletin* is a semi-monthly publication, published on the 1st and 15th of each month, with a circulation of over 35,000 in-state and out-of-state subscribers.

The Division partners with Farm Flavor Media to publish and distribute 15,000 copies of *Mississippi Agriculture*, an annual magazine that tells the stories of Mississippi's agriculture industry to educate the public on the importance of the state's largest industry.

MDAC publishes a monthly e-newsletter, MDAC Ag Matters, to inform the public of happenings within the Department and the agriculture industry as well as an e-newsletter with upcoming agricultural events for producers.

Members of the Market Development team collaborated with former commissioners, past employees, and several organizations including the Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service, MSU CHARM Library, the Catfish Institute, the United States Department of Agriculture Online Library, and the Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum to produce a Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce history book detailing the agency's 117-year past and role in the State. The Mississippi Historical Society presented MDAC with an Award of Merit for its work on the book.



**Market Development team members celebrated National Ag Day on March 21, 2023, with a cow milking contest.**





# Market Development Continued

Livestock and Grain Market News reports are released daily through a federal/state cooperative agreement with USDA. Eight cross-trained Mississippi Board of Animal Health personnel report prices from fourteen livestock auction markets. Prices collected from the fourteen auctions represent 85 percent of all the livestock markets throughout the state. Livestock and grain pricing is collected and disseminated through the USDA and MDAC websites and the radio five days a week. These prices are used by lending institutions, university agricultural economists, consultants, and livestock associations.



Commissioner Gipson and local media celebrities celebrated National Ag Day at the State Capitol in March.

## **Market Development Programs**

The primary focus of the Market Development Division is the promotion of Mississippi agricultural products statewide, nationwide, and worldwide, to increase the purchase and consumption of products that are grown, raised, crafted, and made in the state. MDAC administers several programs that promote and create marketing opportunities for Mississippi's agricultural products.

### **Mississippi Farm Marketplace**

The Mississippi Farm Marketplace is an online market portal that gives farmers a place to list commodities they have for sale, while providing consumers a location to easily source local products. The portal can be accessed at [MSFarmMarketplace.com](http://MSFarmMarketplace.com), where commodities such as produce, meats, dairy products, honey, live animals for custom slaughter, eggs, aquaculture, seafood, and horticulture products can be located. The portal also contains a listing of available on-farm jobs.

### **Agritourism Limited Liability Registration Program**

MDAC's Agritourism Limited Liability Registration Program provides limited liability and promotion to farms engaged in agritourism activities. MDAC registered 93 agritourism operations in the state in FY 2023.

### **Certified Farmers Market Program**

MDAC administers the Certified Farmers Market Program to promote farmers markets in the state with Mississippi farmers selling Mississippi produce and other agricultural products. MDAC certified 18 markets in FY 2023.

### **Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program**

MDAC was awarded \$6.8 million through the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program with the United States Department of Agriculture. Through this initiative, food is procured from local farmers and food producers, including socially disadvantaged farmers and processors, and distributed to underserved communities throughout the state. MDAC has partnered with the Mississippi Food Network, Feeding the Gulf Coast, and Mid-South Food Bank, three Feeding America affiliated food banks, to procure and distribute the local food through their networks of existing and new agency partners.

### **Farm-to-School**

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce partners with the Mississippi Department of Education to promote the purchase of Mississippi-grown fruits and vegetables for the Department of Defense (DoD) Farm-to-School Program. During the 2022-2023 school year, \$71,018 of Mississippi produce items were purchased by schools across the state. MDAC has partnered with the Bower Foundation to reimburse farmers for the freezing and storage costs of fresh-frozen produce purchased through the program. For every \$1 the Bower Foundation invests in the program, \$38 of Mississippi grown fresh-frozen fruits and vegetables are purchased and served to students across Mississippi. Farmers participating in the Farm-to-School Program utilized the Revolving Fund Program to receive their produce payments within five days of delivery.

# Market Development Continued



Commissioner Gipson announced the partnership with food banks for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program on November, 16, 2022.



Commissioner Gipson joined Governor Reeves as he signed a law designating April as Mississippi Native Plant Month on March 6, 2023.

## Native Plant Month

During the 2023 Legislative Session, Senate Bill 2137 was passed designating April as Mississippi Native Plant Month in order to preserve the heritage and importance of native plants for clean air, water, and soil stability. The bill charges MDAC with promoting Mississippi Native Plant Month and educating the public on its importance. MDAC developed a webpage to educate the public on native plants.

## International Trade

MDAC creates international marketing opportunities for Mississippi's farmers and agribusinesses through meetings with international delegations, participation in trade activities, and program offerings through the Southern U.S. Trade Association (SUSTA). MDAC collaborates with other state and federal agencies to deliver accurate information to companies interested in exporting through site visits, seminars, research, and providing potential trade leads and opportunities.



Commissioner Gipson participated in the USDA Agribusiness Trade Mission to the Netherlands to promote Mississippi's agricultural commodities and trade opportunities. MDAC staff met with the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to discuss potential trade opportunities.

MDAC is an active member of SUSTA. MDAC staff serve as liaisons for SUSTA to promote opportunities available for Mississippi agriculture and value-added products, in addition to serving as activity managers for trade shows and missions.

MDAC staff coordinated the Japan Virtual Trade Mission, and the SUSTA pavilion at the Summer Fancy Food Show. MDAC staff also managed the SUSTA pavilion at the 2024 FOODEX Japan food tradeshow in Tokyo, Japan.

Two Mississippi companies participated in SUSTA's cost-share program to explore new markets. Eight Mississippi companies participated in SUSTA's global event activities.





# Market Development Continued

## **Grants and Cost-Share Programs**

The Market Development Division offers grant and cost-share programs to assist farmers and agribusinesses. Funding for these programs is made available through USDA rather than state funds.

### **Specialty Crop Block Grant**

Through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Program, MDAC was awarded \$436,323.35 in farm bill funding to enhance the state's specialty crop industry. MDAC awarded nine projects to universities and producer organizations to administer promotional & educational efforts, and research projects in areas specifically related to raspberries, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, honeybees, and various other fruit and vegetable crops. MDAC has 52 projects currently ongoing.

### **GAP/GHP Cost-Share Program**

MDAC administers the Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) Cost-Share Program. This program reimburses farmers 75 percent, up to \$750, of the cost incurred to obtain the GAP/GHP food safety certification. MDAC granted 19 reimbursements. This program is funded by the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

### **Organic Cost-Share Program**

MDAC offers the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program which reimburses farmers 50 percent, up to \$500, of the costs incurred to obtain the certification. One farm received reimbursement. This program is funded through the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service.

### **Growing Lunch School Garden Grant Program**

MDAC continued the successful Growing Lunch School Garden Grant Program funded through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Program. This program provides grants in an amount up to \$500 to schools interested in building a school garden. MDAC awarded eight school garden grants during fiscal year 2023. MDAC has awarded 92 grants since 2014, when the program was established.

### **Let's Plant Community Garden Grant**

MDAC continued the Let's Plant Community Garden Grant Program through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program for communities interested in creating or expanding a community garden. MDAC awarded five community garden grants in FY 2023 and continued working with an additional five communities.

- Funds awarded to organizations to promote the specialty crop industry: \$436,323.35 to implement 9 projects.
- Farms/Agribusinesses assisted through Market Development Department Programs/Activities:
  - Agritourism Limited Liability Program: 93
  - National Organic Cost-Share Program: 1
  - Farm-to-School Program: 3
  - Farmers Market Certification Program: 18
  - GAP/GHP Cost Share Program: 19
  - Garden Grant Program: 5
  - Specialty Crop Block Grant Program: 52
  - Farmers Market Manager Workshop Attendees: 45
  - Certificates of Free Sale issued: 54 to 7 companies



**Students in a garden funded by the Growing Lunch School Garden Grant Program.**

Director  
Paige Manning  
[paige@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:paige@mdac.ms.gov)





# Genuine MS® Program

*Genuine MS® identifies and promotes products proudly created or produced by Mississippi farmers, artisans, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers.*

The purpose of the Genuine MS® program is to increase public awareness of Mississippi's farm, food, crafted, and fabricated products. The website, [GenuineMS.com](http://GenuineMS.com), serves as a centralized location featuring members' products, while connecting consumers across the globe with the people and places that grow, raise, craft, and make Genuine MS® products. The program provides a platform for members to share their unique stories in an effort to increase consumer awareness of their products. Genuine MS® shows state pride and keeps the economy strong.

# GENUINE MS®

There are four classifications of membership determined by members' products in the Genuine MS® program — Grown, Raised, Crafted, and Made. The Genuine MS® Grown classification consists of farmers who grow everything from produce, nuts, and row crops to horticulture and timber in Mississippi. The Genuine MS® Raised classification consists of farmers, ranchers, and aquaculturists with animals and aquaculture products raised in Mississippi or those selling products from animals and aquaculture products raised in Mississippi. The Genuine MS® Crafted classification consists of craftspeople whose products are hand-created in Mississippi from agricultural products, which includes specialty foods and beverages and pet or artisan products. The Genuine MS® Made classification consists of manufacturers whose products are 51 percent or more manufactured in Mississippi to benefit agriculture.



In FY 2023, Genuine MS® focused on growth in membership as well as expanding pop-up events statewide. The Genuine MS® Pop-Up Store participated in five events in the Mid-South. Genuine MS® added events that include the Mid-South Farm and Gin Show in Memphis and the Mississippi Municipal League convention on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The Genuine MS® Store, located in the Mississippi Farmers Market, has grown in producer participation and in the number of products inside the store. There are approximately 60 members who supply over 500 products for the store's offerings.





# Genuine MS® Program

Continued

Genuine MS® takes great pride in the relationships that have been developed with producers across the state. Due to the growth of the program, Regional County Correspondents have been trained in facilitating relationships with the active members. These duties include consulting and business support. The Regional County Correspondents also attend expos, conventions, and events in their region for Genuine MS®. In 2023, Genuine MS® attended 35 events, six of which were new.



Genuine MS® implemented a strategic plan for its social media heavily leaning on video content obtained from on site farm visits. These visits also have resulted in stronger member relationships allowing MDAC to form mutually beneficial partnerships to highlight the best of all that is Mississippi Grown, Raised, Crafted, and Made. MDAC has streamlined a consistent social media posting schedule that includes interaction such as likes, comments, and shares.



Director  
Lane Milton  
lane@mdac.ms.gov



- Genuine MS® Members: 370
- Genuine MS® grossed over \$90,000 for a 47% increase in sales.
- Over the 11 days of the Mississippi State Fair, the Genuine MS® Pop-Up Store had over \$20,000 in sales. This was a 20% increase from the previous year.
- Promotional efforts: Genuine MS® continues to stay active in promoting the brand across the state. The program participated in an average of 4 events per month such as expos, conventions, or tradeshows.





# Mississippi Farmers Market

*The Mississippi Farmers Market provides a location for Mississippi farmers to sell their locally-grown and produced agricultural products direct to the public.*

The Mississippi Legislature created the Mississippi Farmers Market to provide a facility for the efficient handling of farm products in the interest of the farmer, consumer, general public, and the State of Mississippi. The 18,000-square foot facility serves as a central location for farmers, specialty food makers, and local artisans to sell their agricultural goods and wares. The Market provides farmers with additional marketing opportunities, while increasing consumers' access to fruits, vegetables, and other farm-raised products. The Mississippi Farmers Market is open on Saturdays year-round and Thursdays during the peak produce season.

The Mississippi Farmers Market participates in two USDA Farmers Market Nutrition Programs: the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. These programs provide vouchers to eligible WIC participants and senior citizens to shop at the Market.

The Mississippi Farmers Market offers a café which provides breakfast and lunch six days per week. The Market serves as the location of the Genuine MS® Store which is open five days per week. The Farmers Market is rented for private events.

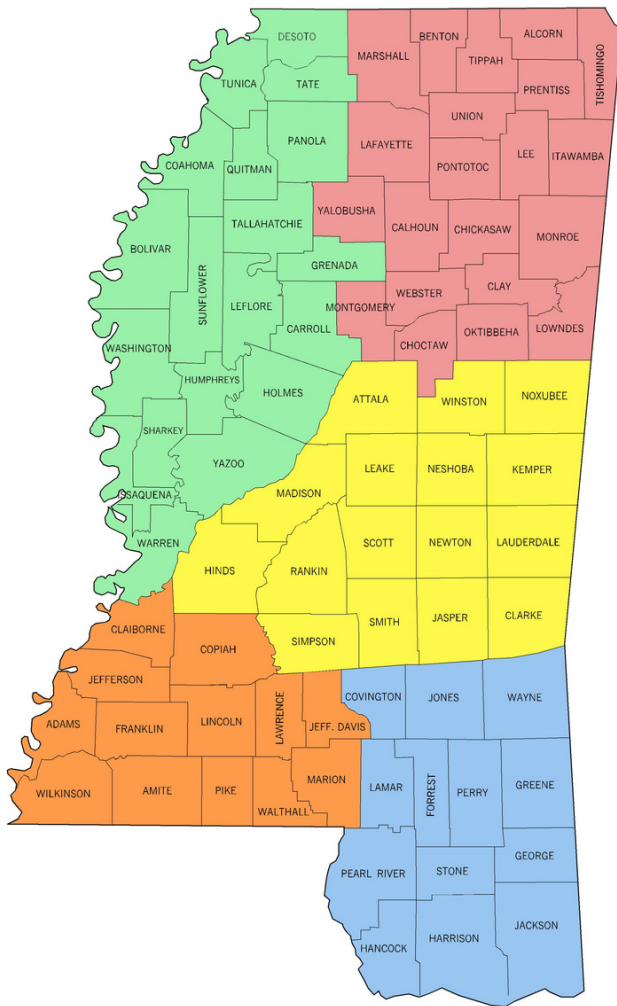
- Vendors certified to sell at market: 95
- Average number of vendors weekly: 32
- Number of seasonal events hosted: 7
- Shoppers: 35,000 annually



**Manager**  
Patrick Duckworth  
FarmersMarket@mdac.ms.gov



# Country Correspondents Program



## MDAC County Correspondents Program

The County Correspondents Program ensures the flow of information on current issues to and from the agency and local farmers in each county in a timely manner. The program designates farmers from every Mississippi county to serve as County Correspondents. Each correspondent communicates with MDAC on issues affecting their local jurisdiction.

An MDAC staff member is assigned to each of the five county correspondent regions. The assigned staff member works closely with the 98 County Correspondents within their region.

**The program is divided into five regions. Each region has one MDAC staff member that provides status updates to the central office in Jackson.**

Director  
Claude Nash  
[claudenash@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:claudenash@mdac.ms.gov)



# Timber Commerce

*The Timber Commerce Division actively engages with state agencies and the private sector to promote the Mississippi timber industry internationally and domestically. The Timber Commerce Division works with experts on infrastructure, supply chain, and transportation solutions to benefit the timber industry.*

The Division launched a Mississippi Timber website as part of a strategic 5-year plan. Its purpose is to highlight Mississippi's timber industry, including manufacturing quantities of wood in state forestlands and the economic impact forestry contributes to Mississippi. The site is valuable tool for research, education, and economic development. The site location is <https://timber.mdac.ms.gov/>.

Maps are now available to show facility locations with production information (figure 1), green tons in each county, forestland percentage in each county (figure 2), state port locations (figure 3), and Mississippi international trade maps (figure 4).

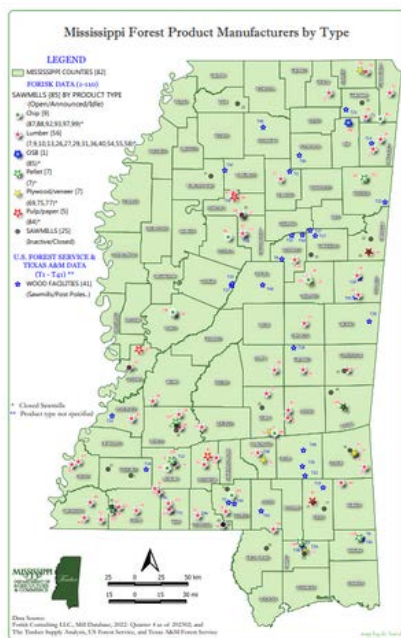


Figure 1

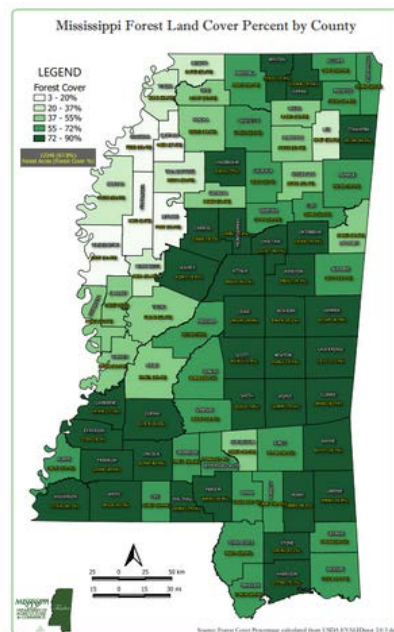


Figure 2



Figure 3





# Timber Commerce Continued

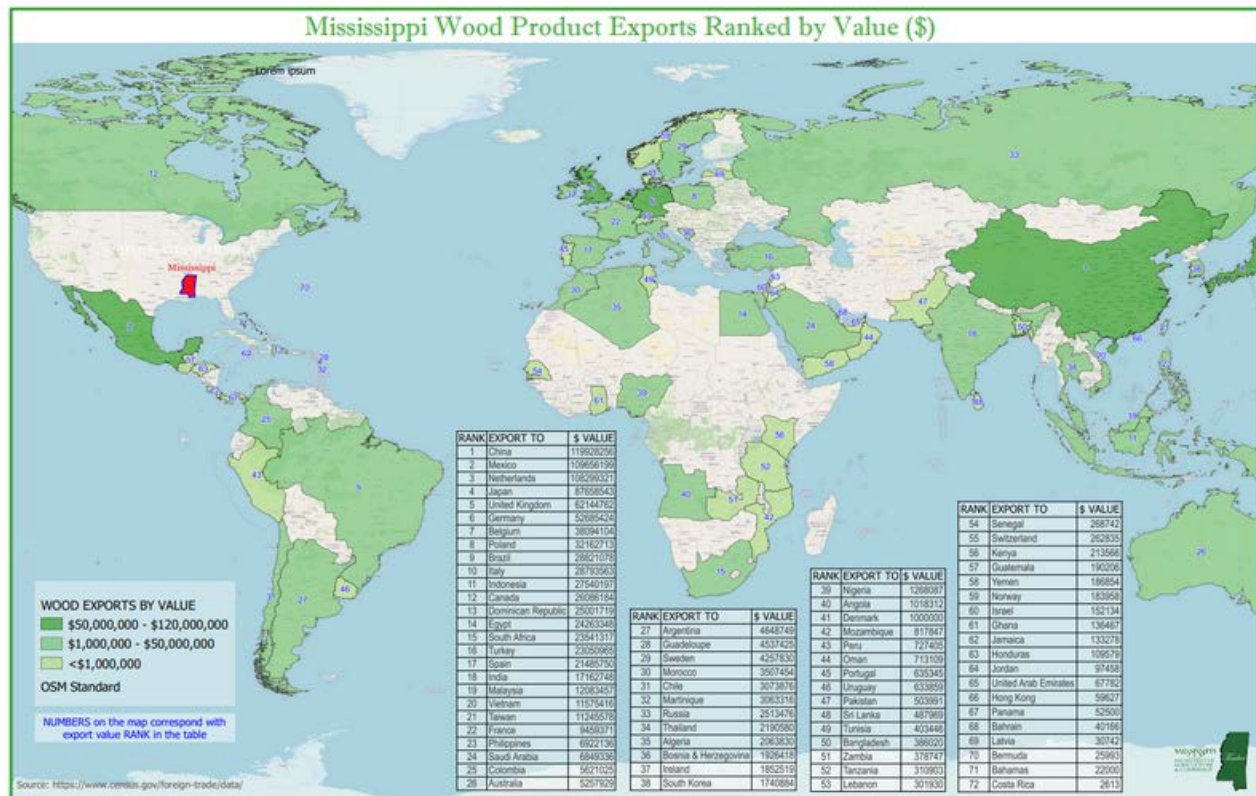


Figure 4

A number of leads for new manufacturers have resulted from the website. These leads open up the opportunity for collaborative work among state agencies and associations to draw more developers to invest in the state.

Additionally, the new website has been visited by 18 other countries including Canada, China, South Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom, Vietnam, Austria, France, Mexico, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, Spain, and the United Arab Emirates.

As a direct result from a connection established during a 2022 International Inbound Trade Mission, the Timber Commerce Division hosted a buyer from the Dominican Republic to buy lumber and building products. Planning is underway for the 2024 International Inbound Trade Mission.

- Launched a new timber website to highlight and promote Mississippi's timber industry.
- Hosted timber buyer from the Dominican Republic.
- Planning 2024 International Inbound Trade Mission.

Director  
Ginger Williamson  
[ginger@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:ginger@mdac.ms.gov)



# Agriculture Workforce Education, Outreach, and Development

*Agriculture Workforce Education, Outreach, and Development works with schools and universities, agriculture organizations, and government partners to grow the agricultural workforce and connect it to employers.*

The Agriculture Workforce Education, Outreach, and Development Program assists the agriculture industry in meeting employment demands of Mississippi's agriculture workforce and creates a pipeline of quality educational and training opportunities for high school and college students pursuing a career in agriculture. The program partners with Mississippi agribusinesses, industries, agricultural youth development organizations, and educational institutions to increase the number of qualified applicants for agricultural jobs. The MDAC internship program is also facilitated through this Division.



## Mississippi State Fair Ag Expo & Rodeo Showcase

The Division facilitated the 2022 Mississippi State Fair Ag Expo in the Mississippi Trade Mart during the 163rd Mississippi State Fair. The expo included agricultural exhibits, educational exhibits, interactive activities with the FARMtastic program, entertainment, and an antique car show. The Expo also featured FFA and 4-H competitive events and student exhibits. More than 45,000 people attended the show inside the Mississippi Trade Mart. More than 400 FFA volunteers served as exhibit hosts for FARMtastic and the agricultural exhibits.

## Kids Day at the Dixie National Rodeo

The first Kids Day took place at the Dixie National Rodeo with more than 2,000 school children attending a special free rodeo performance featuring Dusty the Clown and professional barrel racing. Southern AgCredit sponsored the event by providing the children with bandanas, and a number of children won cowboy hats and family packs of tickets to the upcoming rodeo.



# Agriculture Workforce Education, Outreach, and Development

Continued



## Rodeo Days

The Division hosted the second annual Dixie National Rodeo Days Expo in the Mississippi Trade Mart during the first weekend of the Dixie National Rodeo in February. The expo featured a new area designated as the “Cowboy Corner” which included free haircuts from The Noble Barber, a custom hat shaper, and vendors selling artisan items for men. The agricultural literacy exhibit was provided by Mississippi State Extension’s FARMtastic program, rodeo personalities, educational and recruitment exhibits from educational partners, shopping, and 4-H Crepe Cooking Contest and FFA MADE Ag Mechanics competition.

## Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council

The second cohort of the Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council concluded, comprised of 12 high school seniors from across the state, and the third group of 14 members was selected for the 2023-2024 year. The council members had an opportunity to volunteer at various MDAC events, tour a variety of agricultural businesses and learn about advocacy, communications, and the legislative process related to Mississippi’s agriculture industry.



- Partnered with the MDAC Wild Hog Control Program, along with Wildlife Dominion to continue the Mississippi Youth Trapping Corps.
- Hosted the 2023 Mississippi FFA Convention at the Mississippi Trade Mart in Jackson for the first time ever.
- Hosted an Ag Apprenticeship Summit with the US Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship team to educate agricultural businesses, schools and leaders on the benefits and steps it takes to establish an apprenticeship program. 30 attendees met in the Mississippi Trade Mart to learn more about the apprenticeship program.

## MDAC Internship Program

The MDAC Internship Program employed six interns in 2023 to work in various areas throughout the department. The program also welcomed three law school students during the spring semester and summer terms.

The FFA internship program brings a Mississippi FFA State Officer to work in the department, filling various roles during the entire school year from August to May. Funding was provided to the Wild Hog Control Program through the MSU Extension/NRCS Service-Learning summer program to host an intern.

A separate USDA-NRCS grant allowed MDAC to hire two additional seasonal interns for the Ag Museum and special events such as the State Fair and Dixie National Rodeo.

Director  
Dr. Gayle Clark  
[gayle@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:gayle@mdac.ms.gov)





# Wild Hog Control Program

*Through the Wild Hog Control Program (WHCP), the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce offers wild hog traps to land managers for the control of wild hogs on private agricultural and forestry lands in Mississippi.*

Wild hogs cause more than \$60 million in property damage in the state each year with substantial damage to row crops, pastures, and forestlands. The Wild Hog Control Program (WHCP) uses traps to help control this problem. Traps are deployed in concentrated focal areas across the state. Focal areas are determined by MDAC through an application process. MDAC provides the training necessary to use the “smart” traps and technical guidance regarding the most effective methods to trap and control wild hogs on private lands.

Submitted applications are evaluated based on the number of acres available for trapping, historical agricultural losses caused by wild hogs on the property, and current trapping efforts on the property. A cooperative application is encouraged for small acreage. Adjoining land managers of small parcels should work together to submit one application. Traps are available for one-month intervals, dependent upon use and success. One trap per 500 acres is recommended, depending on landscape and land use.

The WHCP was expanded by the development of the Youth Trapping Corps. The Youth Trapping Corps educates and professionally develops student members of agriculture-based organizations, such as FFA, on the impact of nuisance animals on agriculture and the importance of wild hog management. The first-of-its-kind program provides FFA students around the state the opportunity to offer wild hog trapping services while gaining valuable skills and work-based learning experiences.

- Application periods opened to the public for submission of trap applications: 4
- Traps available for landowners: 24 for each application period
- Wild hogs captured: 934 on 52 properties in 33 counties
- Created the WHCP Youth Trapping Corps.
- WHCP staff assisted USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services in obtaining biological samples from wild hogs for disease surveillance.
- WHCP staff provided information regarding wild hog management at various public meetings and events across the state.

For this initiative, MDAC partnered with Wildlife Dominion Management, LLC and the Mississippi FFA Association to educate, train, and provide technical support for the implementation of wild hog population control. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by MDAC, Wildlife Dominion Management, LLC, and FFA to mark this innovative partnership. Schools and FFA chapters will be identified in FY2024 for participation in the Youth Trapping Corps.



**Damage done by wild hogs to agricultural land.**



# Wild Hog Control Program Continued

The Mississippi Pork Board and the National Pork Board donated two panel trap systems to MDAC for support of the WHCP. The trap systems included traps, HogEye Camera Systems, solar power components, and custom trailers. The donated trap systems will provide years of service to landowners and farmers through the WHCP.



**Wild hogs rooting in land.**



**Mississippi Pork Producer Association members and Commissioner Gipson.**



**The WHCP uses HogEye Systems to capture and contain wild hogs in Mississippi.**



**A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by MDAC, Wildlife Dominion Management, LLC and FFA to mark their partnership.**

Director  
Chris McDonald  
[chris@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:chris@mdac.ms.gov)



# Farmers Market Nutrition Program

*Farmers Market Nutrition Programs provide benefits for eligible individuals to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables which increases access to healthy produce, while creating marketing opportunities for farmers.*

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce coordinates two USDA-funded supplemental nutrition programs that benefit fruit and vegetable growers and eligible Women, Infants, and Children's (WIC) program participants and low-income senior citizens in select communities of Mississippi. The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program provide benefits in the form of checks for nutritionally at-risk Mississippi residents to redeem at authorized farmers markets in the state.

- Farmers markets participating in the WIC and Seniors FMNP: 29 farmers markets and 2 farm stands
- Farmers participating in the FMNP: 150
- Low-income Mississippi residents receiving FMNP (WIC and Senior) checks to redeem at participating farmers markets: 8,264
- Value of vouchers redeemed in both programs: \$131,360



**Volunteer helping a Senior FMNP participant at the Mississippi Farmers Market.**



**The Oxford Farmers Market participates the WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs.**

Director  
Purvie Green  
[purvie@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:purvie@mdac.ms.gov)



# Agriculture and Livestock Theft Bureau

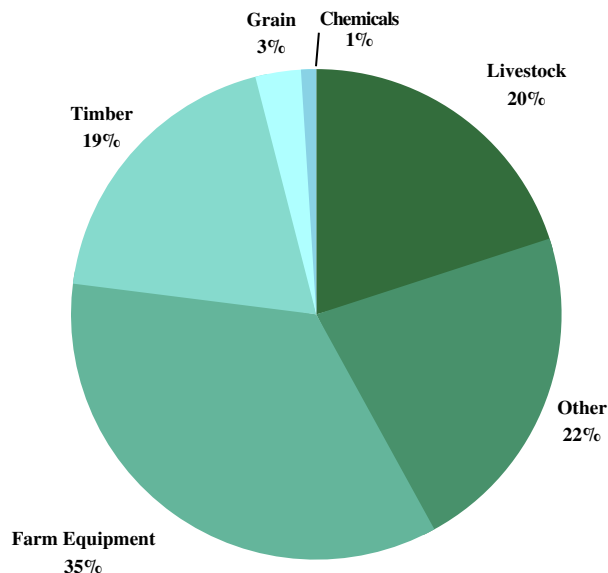
*The Mississippi Agriculture and Livestock Theft Bureau assists in the investigation of farm and agriculture-related crimes.*

The Mississippi Agriculture and Livestock Theft Bureau (MALTB) enforces all state laws pertaining to the theft of cattle, horses, swine, poultry, fish, farm equipment, chemicals, timber, and other farm or agriculture-related crimes. The Bureau consists of 11 investigators. The Bureau is also responsible for the investigation and prosecution of all persons who violate any of the laws administered by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

In addition to its law enforcement function, MALTB maintains registration of all livestock brands. Branding is not required for livestock in Mississippi. However, if livestock are branded, the brand must be registered. The brands are recorded for a five-year period at a cost of five dollars. Registered brands are kept in a regularly updated pdf document that is distributed to law enforcement members throughout the state.



**Percentage Distribution of Dollar Value of Reported Crimes**



- Cases investigated: 193 cases with reported property value of \$3,894,125
- Cases resolved: 107 cases with recovered property value of \$2,188,405
- Recovery rate: 56%
- Brands issued: 1,210 brands which generated approximately \$6,050 over a five year period



Director  
Dean Barnard  
dean@mdac.ms.gov





# Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum

*The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum tells the story of Mississippi's agricultural history through indoor and outdoor exhibits and events.*

The mission of the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum is to create an environment that communicates the value of past and present Mississippi agricultural lifestyles, relationships, and practices and their relevance to the future of all people. The Museum consists of multiple exhibits including Small Town, Mississippi, a train exhibit featuring several gauges of trains, and a nature trail. The Fortenberry-Parkman Farmstead, a designated Mississippi Landmark dating back to 1860, includes many of the original buildings from a farmstead once located in Jefferson Davis County. The Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum is home to the Bisland Cotton Gin (America's oldest working cotton gin) and the National Agricultural Aviation Museum.

## **Highlight of Annual Events**

Mississippi Science Fest - September 16-17, 2022

Attendance: 5,003

- Students and adults attending the festival listened to presenters including groups from Mississippi State University Engineering Departments, 4-H, MSU Extension, agricultural associations, and STEM-based private businesses.

October Pumpkin Adventure - October 5-8, 12-15, & 19-22, 2022

Attendance: 6,906

- This event included a hayride tour gardens and Small Town, Mississippi, a walk around the Museum, two corn pits, a pumpkin to take home, cookies, and milk.

Harvest Festival - November 8-12, 2022

Attendance: 5,812

- This educational event consisted of demonstrations at the sawmill, cane mill, print shop, blacksmith shop, and grist mill. The Bisland Cotton Gin ginned multiple bales of cotton for visitors. The event also featured hit-and-miss engines, bluegrass music, antique tractors, and live demonstrations by interpreters at the Fortenberry-Parkman Farmstead.

Homestead for the Holidays - December 8-9, 2022

Attendance: 1,558

- This event was sponsored by the Mississippi Egg Marketing Board, the Mississippi Beef Council, and the Mississippi Loggers Association. Guests were treated to wagon and train rides, Small Town in Lights, story time with Mrs. Claus, live music, and breakfast for dinner.

Spring Farm Days - March 2-4, 2023

Attendance: 1,604

- This event offered the opportunity for visitors to see tractor and blacksmith demonstrations and tour the Fortenberry-Parkman Farmstead over a three-day period.

Easter at the Ag Museum - April 8, 2023

Attendance: 1,586

- Guests walked down the rabbit trail that meandered throughout the Museum grounds while collecting Easter eggs.



Night on the Town - May 6, 2023

Attendance: 50

- This event was a perfect night for couples planning a date night or anyone looking for a night out. With admission, guests received a complimentary drink ticket and heavy hors d'oeuvres plate presented by the Tasty Side of Agriculture. Attendees enjoyed an outdoor movie, live music, yard games, and access to the Museum grounds.



# Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum

Continued

Pickle Fest - June 10, 2023

Attendance: 2,579

- This year the award-winning Pickle Fest had over 90 vendors and thousands of attendees come out to promote all things pickled. The Museum partnered with local individuals and restaurants to provide pickle-themed foods, drinks, and novelty items to the public. One hour into the event a severe storm surge swept through the Museum grounds. Despite the storm, the event remained open and attendees enjoyed the adjusted event experience.



## Oral History Project

The Education and Collection Teams initiated an Oral History Archive through a grant received from the Mississippi Humanities Council. The main objective of this initiative is to gather and share the ordinary stories of agricultural families in Mississippi. The Museum has conducted interviews with 15 individuals and captured over 60 individual stories so far.

- Annual Museum visitors: 118,291
- Museum events hosted and attendees: 8 events with 25,098 total attendees
- Private events held: 398
- The National Agricultural Aviation Museum updated its lighting system and video display with the generous support of an endowment from the estate of esteemed agricultural pilot and pioneer, Dick Reade.
- The Mississippi Association of Petroleum Landmen redesigned the signage and presentation area for the outdoor exhibit showcasing petroleum and natural gas.

## Church Restoration

The historic Small Town church has undergone significant restoration and is nearing completion. These repairs and restorations are necessary to keep this focal point available for Museum goers for years to come. Crews removed the rotten wood throughout the structure, fixed window panes, and will be repainting the exterior in the near future.



## The Bisland Cotton Gin

The Bisland Cotton Gin, circa 1892, remains the oldest working Cotton Gin in the United States. It is considered the heartbeat of the Museum as it gins approximately four to five bales of cotton annually during Harvest Fest. Four years ago, the head of the massive engine cracked and had to be sent for repairs. The Museum operated the gin with a temporary repair, but now the head of the gin engine has been repaired and is seated in its original spot.



Director  
Theresa Love  
[theresa@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:theresa@mdac.ms.gov)



@msagmuseum



@msagmuseum



Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum





# Mississippi State Fairgrounds

*The Mississippi State Fairgrounds provides a venue to promote agriculture, industry, and entertainment for Mississippians.*

The Mississippi State Fairgrounds strives to create a safe and exciting environment for all to experience agriculture, enjoy entertainment, and be an integral part of the economic impact and family-friendly atmosphere of the capital city. The Mississippi Fairgrounds Complex covers over 100 acres with a mile-long midway. The Fairgrounds consists of the Mississippi Coliseum, the new Mississippi Trade Mart, Kirk Fordice Equine Center, 14 livestock barns, and space to park more than 7,000 vehicles. The Fairgrounds provides a venue for a number of livestock and horse shows, concerts, exhibitions, trade shows, and various competitions. Two popular annual events held at the Fairgrounds annually are the Junior League of Jackson's Mistletoe Marketplace and Comic-Con.



## Highlights of Annual Events:

Mississippi State Fair - October 6-16, 2022

Attendance: 519,000

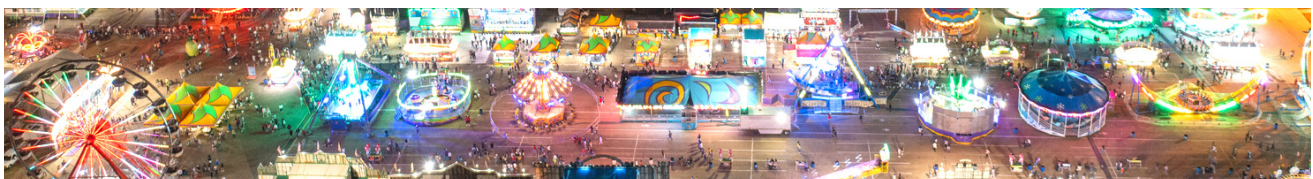
- Fairgoers enjoyed timeless traditions of livestock shows, the petting zoo, pig races, and all the fan-favorite foods. Frontier Village had attractions, such as, West Texas Rattlesnake Show and the Great American Wild West Show.

Dixie National Rodeo and Livestock Show

January 6 - February 19, 2023

Attendance: 50,000+ attended Rodeo

- The Fairgrounds hosted this 58th annual event. The largest rodeo east of the Mississippi River was met with record breaking ticket sales exceeding \$1 million. The Fairgrounds continued the Dixie National Rodeo Days and the Dixie National Steakhouse in the Trade Mart.



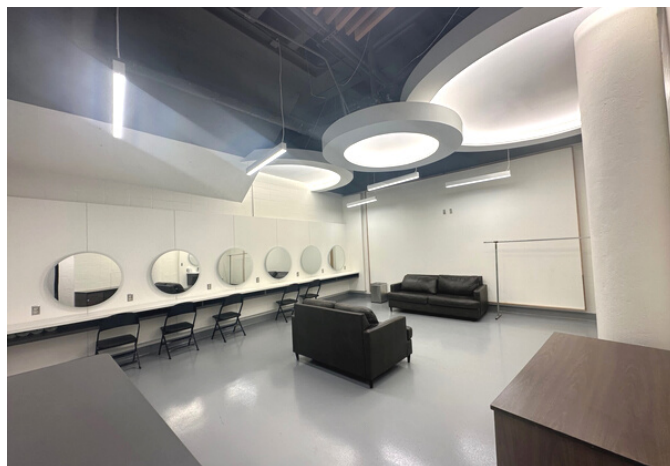


# Mississippi State Fairgrounds Continued

## New Projects

In September 2022, the State of Mississippi demolished the old Oyo Hotel. This space has benefited the Fairgrounds by providing an additional 250 parking spaces. This lot has been used for parking for numerous concerts and was rented for the Giant Christmas Tree Sale.

The Fairgrounds completed the \$1 million Coliseum dressing room project. The project combined eight smaller dressing rooms into four large rooms. All bathroom fixtures were replaced, flooring and ceiling updated, and new furnishings modernized. The dressing rooms have been a welcomed addition to musical artists, and sports teams.




**The renovated dressing rooms in the Mississippi Coliseum.**



**The Christmas Tree Sale uses the new Fairgrounds lot.**



**The parking lot site that is now used for numerous events.**

 @mississippifairgrounds, @dixienationalrodeo, and @statefairms

 @mississippifairgrounds, @dixienationalrodeo, and @msstatefair

 Mississippi State Fairgrounds, Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo, and Mississippi State Fair

- Annual visitors to the Mississippi State Fairgrounds: 1.5 Million+
- Economic Impact of Mississippi State Fair: \$40 Million (Study conducted by Jackson State University)

## Events held at Mississippi State Fairgrounds:

- Equine events: 21
- Livestock: 10
- Trade: 38
- Entertainment/Concerts: 19
- Private events: 67
- MDAC hosted events: 8
- Served as an emergency State Staging Area for water distribution and provided water from its well water system during the Jackson water crisis.

Director  
Michael Lasseter  
michaelL@mdac.ms.gov







# Bureau of Plant Industry

## **Plant Pest Programs - Pesticide Program - Seed Program and State Seed Laboratory Feed, Fertilizer, Lime, and Soil Program**

*The Bureau of Plant Industry protects the agricultural and horticultural interests of the state from harmful insects, diseases, and weeds.*

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) is a regulatory and service division of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. BPI serves as the Plant Protection and Quarantine Division of the agency. BPI administers 31 programs pertaining to agricultural aviation, pesticides, plant pests, honey bees, seed, animal feed, fertilizer, lime, and soil/plant amendments. Additionally, the Bureau maintains cooperative agreements with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in administration and enforcement of state and federal laws. BPI is also designated by the federal government as the state agency responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

The Bureau of Plant Industry collaborates with a number of agricultural organizations to keep producers and the agriculture industry informed of program updates, and BPI provides training materials. In FY 2023, BPI provided updates at meetings held by the following organizations:

- Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association
- Mississippi Turfgrass Association
- Mississippi Pest Control Association
- Mississippi Vegetation Management Association
- Mississippi Rice Council
- Nursery and Landscape Association
- Mississippi Entomological Association
- Mississippi State University – Row Crop Short Course
- Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation – Agricultural Consultants Meeting
- Mississippi Agricultural Consultants Association
- Mississippi Sweet Potato Council
- Mississippi Agricultural Industry Council
- Mississippi Seedmen’s Association

BPI provided Pesticide Re-certification trainings at the following locations:

- Panola County Extension Office
- Coastal Research and Extension Center
- Forrest County Extension Office
- Central MS Research and Extension Center
- Delta Research and Extension Center
- North MS Research and Extension Center
- Commercial Pest Control Webinar
- Termite University

Director  
Laura Vollar  
laurav@mdac.ms.gov



# Plant Pest Programs

*The Bureau of Plant Industry's Plant Pest Programs protect the agricultural and horticultural interests of the state from the introduction and spread of injurious insects and plant diseases within the state.*

Under the provisions of the Mississippi Plant Act, the Bureau of Plant Industry carries out plant pest programs designated to prevent the spread of destructive insects, diseases, and other pests when plant material, machinery, and carriers are transported. These programs include inspection, certification, quarantine, and survey activities.

An Online Bollweevil Reporting System was developed to provide growers 24 hour access to reporting acreage and assessment. The Bureau continued with its Cogongrass control program implemented the previous year. Cogongrass is considered one of the worst invasive weeds in the world and can be found in most counties in Mississippi. Control in many areas has become a difficult and expensive battle for landowners and livestock producers. Through federal funding, the Bureau provides herbicide to landowners to control this weed.

- Nurseries and nursery dealers certified: 964
- Nursery and nursery dealer inspections: 1,306
- Phytosanitary certificates issued for plant material and seed export: 346

#### Visual surveys conducted:

- Nurseries and nursery dealers: 1,280 surveys state-wide
- Corn: 30 surveys in 9 production fields
- Cotton: 32 surveys in 67 cotton production fields in 5 counties
- Rice: 46 surveys in rice production fields

#### Other services:

- Traps set for Exotic Bark Beetle: 947 within Lowndes, Oktibbeha, and Clay Counties
- Total traps set and screened for exotic species: 2,631
- Commercial sweet potato businesses served: 45 operated by 64 growers
- Acres of sweet potatoes monitored for Sweet Potato Weevil: 27,845 (no positive detections)
- Colonies of honeybees certified and inspected: 24,548



**Cogongrass is an invasive weed that BPI is working to control.**

- Plant Pest Program Director Kacey Watson was elected Vice-President of Mississippi/Alabama Pest Risk Committee.
- Recognized by USDA for conducting citrus greening surveys to prevent the introduction and spread of this harmful disease.

State Entomologist  
Randy Boyle  
randy@mdac.ms.gov





# Pesticide Program

*The Pesticide Program protects the agriculture industry through the registration of pesticide products, regulation of purchasing and application of pesticides, and regulation and licensing of aerial applicators.*

Under the provisions of the Mississippi Pesticide Law, the Bureau of Plant Industry carries out various activities to register and inspect pesticide products, administers special types of pesticide registrations and exemptions, licenses dealers of restricted-use pesticides, and conducts activities protecting the general public and the environment from possible pesticide contamination and misuse.

BPI has continued its efforts implementing the Mississippi Honeybee Stewardship Program. The program promotes awareness, communication, and education between beekeepers and farmers. This program was developed through a joint effort between the Mississippi Farm Bureau, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Mississippi Beekeepers Association, Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association, Mississippi State University Extension Service, Mississippi Agricultural Consultants Association, Mississippi Agricultural Industry Council, and row crop farmers.

- Pesticide products registered for sale in the State of Mississippi: 15,571
- Samples collected from products available at retail and distribution outlets to check compliance with state and federal pesticide laws: 242
- Stop-sale orders issued on pesticide products found to be deficient, misbranded, and non-registered: 89
- Special-use registrations (Section 24c of FIFRA) issued on pesticide products: 7
- Emergency exemptions (Section 18 of FIFRA) issued on pesticide products: 1
- Dealers licensed to sell restricted use pesticide products: 257
- Registered technician identification cards issued to persons engaged in professional services such as pest control and weed control services: 2,252
- Licenses and permits issued to persons engaged in professional services: 794
- Aerial licenses issued for agricultural purposes:
  - Agricultural aviation pilots: 217
  - Applicators: 88
  - Aircrafts: 178
- Pest management consultants licenses issued: 154
- Private applicator certificates issued: 1,848
- Commercial applicator certificates issued: 514
- Horticulturist licenses issued: 139
- Tree surgeons licenses renewed and issued: 119

# Pesticide Program

Continued

- Inspections conducted:
  - Producer-establishment inspections: 34
  - Marketplace inspections: 713
  - Applicator records inspections: 684
  - RUP dealer records inspections: 194
  - Container/containment inspections: 37
  - Non-agricultural/for cause inspections of pesticide misuse: 30
  - Agricultural/for cause inspections of pesticide misuse: 61
  - Non-agricultural inspections of pesticide use: 1,711
  - Agricultural inspections of pesticide use: 59
  - Worker protection inspections: 24
- Samples collected under the Pesticide Enforcement Program: 88
- MDAC's Waste Disposal Program has played an important role in environmental protection by offering farmers and landowners a safe way to dispose of pesticides to help reduce risks associated with pesticide waste disposal.
- MDAC continues to support the Mississippi State University Extension Termite University to conduct training and recertification.
- The Certification and Training Plan was approved by EPA and is in the process of being implemented.
- MDAC continues to add programs to the AgNet system for all inspection activities at BPI.
- The Pesticide Registration online system was rebuilt providing the industry with 24-hour access to registration and renewals.



Inspectors investigate complaints of pesticide drift onto non-target vegetation as is shown on the tree.

Director  
Jasper Cobb  
[jasper@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:jasper@mdac.ms.gov)



# Seed Program and State Seed Lab

*The Seed Program and State Seed Laboratory protect and support the seed industry and farmers through regulation and seed testing.*

The Seed Testing Laboratory provides regulatory and service seed testing to the seed industry and farmers of Mississippi. The seed lab inspects and collects samples of seed offered for sale to determine truth-in-labeling. Seed companies and farmers may submit samples of seed for testing to obtain quality and purity levels of seed. Regulatory and service tests protect and support seed companies and farmers by providing unbiased and reliable information in a timely manner. The Seed Testing Laboratory also tests all seed for the Mississippi Certified Seed Program and the Mississippi Crop Improvement Association



- Permits issued for the sale of seed to be planted: 2,040
- Seed samples received: 13,661
- Tests conducted on seeds: 32,712
- Official regulatory seed samples collected: 4,050
- Official regulatory seed samples found to be in violation of the State Seed Law: 77
- Special tests conducted on seed such as cool germ test, accelerated aging, and chemical tests: 6,985
- Seed Lab Director nominated as First Vice-President of Association of American Seed Control Officials and became the Vice President of the Association of Official Seed Analysts.
- Working with MSU Extension Service to develop Seed Technology Short Course and assisted Mississippi State University students with graduate research projects
- Provided education and outreach through laboratory tours.

Director  
James Smith  
[jamess@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:jamess@mdac.ms.gov)



# Feed, Fertilizer, Lime, and Soil Amendments

*The Feed, Fertilizer, Lime, and Soil Amendments Program protects the agriculture industry through the regulation of feed, fertilizer, lime, and soil amendment products sold in the state of Mississippi.*

Under provisions of Mississippi laws regulating feed, fertilizer, lime, and soil amendment products, the Bureau of Plant Industry carries out activities that include registering products and facilities, collecting registration and inspection fees, inspecting and sampling products for label guarantees, and assessing penalties for substandard products.

All brands and grades of fertilizer, lime, and soil/plant amendment products must be registered with the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce before sold in the state of Mississippi. Items subject to registration include liming materials, fertilizer materials, mixed grades of fertilizer and all products sold to promote plant growth by means other than supplying a recognized plant food element, or those products applied to plants, seed, or soil to improve germination, growth, yield, product quality, reproduction, flavor, or other desirable characteristics of plants. The Bureau of Plant Industry collects reports from fertilizer, soil, and plant amendment registrants of the tonnage of materials sold in the state annually.

- Feed products registered: 21,840 products from 1,442 feed distributors
- Feed samples collected: 1,372
- Fertilizer products registered: 14,692 products from 804 fertilizer distributors
- Fertilizer samples collected: 517
- Lime products registered: 194 products from 83 distributors
- Lime samples collected: 83
- Rebuilt the Feed, Fertilizer, Soil and Plant Amendment Registration on-line system providing industry 24 hour access to registration and renewals.

Branch Director  
Buddy Brannon  
[buddyb@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:buddyb@mdac.ms.gov)





# Regulatory Services

Consumer Protection - Federal and State Inspection - Petroleum Inspection - Meat Inspection  
Weights and Measures - Metrology Lab - Grain Dealers and Warehouses

*The Bureau of Regulatory Services is a regulatory bureau within the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Its mission is to effectively and efficiently administer and enforce the laws and regulations charged to the Bureau.*

The Bureau protects the health and economic welfare of all citizens, affords a measure of economic protection which citizens cannot provide for themselves, and strives for equity in the marketplace which works to the good of all citizens of this state.

The Bureau is divided into area-specific divisions that regulate certain businesses within the state. The Bureau administers state laws and promulgates regulations to support those laws in the areas of meat inspection, retail food sanitation, labeling laws, grains, aquaculture, peanuts, petroleum, and weights and measures. The Bureau partners with multiple federal and state agencies to carry out its mission.

MDAC's Weights and Measures Division, Consumer Protection Division, Petroleum Products Inspection Division, and State Metrology Laboratory utilizes inspection stickers to inform the public of when inspections were conducted as well as the contact information for each division. Each year, the inspection stickers bear the color of one of Mississippi's colleges or universities. In 2023, the colors of Delta State University were selected for inspection stickers.



Bureau Director  
Jennifer Thompson  
[jennifer@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:jennifer@mdac.ms.gov)

# Consumer Protection

*The Consumer Protection Division protects the interests of the general public by ensuring food quality, safety, fairness, and equity in the retail marketplace.*

The Consumer Protection Division is one of the most diversified divisions within the Department. The Division protects Mississippi consumers on a daily basis by enforcing retail food safety and sanitation laws and regulations, weights and measures standards, and food labeling requirements in retail food establishments such as convenience stores and grocery stores.

The Division conducts routine inspections of all retail food establishments throughout the state to ensure that food safety and sanitation regulations are being met. Inspectors routinely examine meat market sanitation, ensure food is stored at appropriate temperatures, confirm the availability of hot water and soap in restrooms, and monitor stores to ensure the absence of insects and rodents. Inspectors test scales and check UPC pricing for accuracy to make sure the consumer is not being overcharged or undersold. Inspections are performed to ensure illegally processed meats are not sold in retail food establishments. Additionally, Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) inspections are conducted to ensure foods such as muscle cuts of meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, and unprocessed nuts have country-of-origin declarations at the final point of sale.

The Consumer Protection Division conducts labeling inspections in restaurants throughout the state to ensure that catfish, shrimp, and crawfish being promoted as U.S. products are U.S. products and not being discreetly replaced with foreign substitutes.

The Division works in collaboration with the Mississippi State Department of Health and the Mississippi State Chemical Lab to regulate the sale of honey and syrup. Pure honey and pure syrup label inspections are performed to ensure consumers are receiving the product as it is advertised on the labels.



Director  
Henri Fuselier  
henri@mdac.ms.gov

- Retail food establishment licenses issued: 2,162
- Retail egg licenses issued: 90
- Mobile Vendor licenses issued: 53
- Inspections conducted:
  - Businesses inspected: 4,912
  - Retail scale inspections: 6,889
  - Retail food sanitation inspections: 2,790
  - Net weight inspections: 34,270
  - Disposition of garbage inspections: 2,790
  - UPC price verification inspections: 1,887
  - Shell eggs inspected: 23,327 dozen
  - Catfish/Shrimp/Crawfish Marketing inspections: 396
- USDA COOL audits conducted: 35



# Federal and State Inspection Program

*The Federal/State Inspection Program Division provides quality inspections for produce growers as well as unbiased food safety audits.*

## **Food Safety**

This Division conducts fruit and vegetable inspections as well as third party food safety audits known as Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) audits. All inspections and food safety audits are provided statewide to farms, packers, and wholesalers.

The GAP/GHP audits are voluntary, independent audits of produce suppliers throughout the production and supply chain. GAP/GHP audits focus on best agricultural practices to verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards. The audits verify adherence to the recommendations made in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's *Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* and industry recognized food safety practices.

- USDA GAP/GHP food safety audits conducted: 84
- USDA shipping point inspections performed: 85 semi-truck loads
- USDA Farmers' stock peanuts graded: 24,921 tons
- USDA Peanut A-Flavus chemical testing: 916 semi-truck loads

USDA Shipping Point Inspections are conducted upon request to provide growers and packers with a USDA Certificate showing proof of grade and condition for each load of produce as it is being loaded for transit to buyers or end users.

Farmer Stock Peanuts must be inspected, and a grade issued per lot for the farmer to receive payment at the point of sale. The Federal/State Inspection Program Division grades the peanuts brought to buying points in the state.

## **Produce Safety**

*The Produce Safety Division provides food safety assurance for consumers of fresh fruit and vegetables which are grown in Mississippi*

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce's Produce Safety Division implements the Produce Safety Rule in Mississippi. It also provides Outreach and On Farm Readiness Reviews to farmers prior to an operation having an inspection. The outreach team works to increase awareness of the Produce Safety Rule as well as help growers prepare their operations for compliance. Most outreach services, except for required trainings, are free to growers in Mississippi.

- New farms identified: 89
- Inspections at identified farms performed: 16
- Produce Safety Alliance Grower trainings conducted in conjunction with MSU: 4
- Developed Produce Safety Division publications for grower education.
- Promoted the Produce Safety rule at more than 10 meetings and workshops statewide.
- Total number of farms processed, certified, or exempted in the Produce Safety Program: 405



Director  
Kevin Riffin  
kevin@mdac.ms.gov

# Petroleum Inspection

*The Petroleum Products Inspection Division regulates the motor fuel sold in Mississippi to ensure that those who purchase petroleum products and motor fuels get what they pay for in terms of quality and quantity.*

All petroleum products sold in the state must be registered with MDAC's Petroleum Products Inspection Division. All retail motor fuel products which include gasoline, ethanol blended fuel, diesel fuel, biodiesel blended fuel, and kerosene, are analyzed by the Mississippi State Chemical Lab to ensure product compliance within American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) specifications. Analysis includes tests for octane number, alcohol content, diesel flash point, biodiesel content, and the presence of water in fuel.

The Division regulates approximately 2.3 billion gallons of fuel consumed by Mississippians and visitors to the state and conducts annual inspections of the Retail Motor-Fuel Dispensers (RMFD), commonly known as gas pumps, to ensure compliance with all laws and regulations. These inspections consist of ensuring the accuracy of RMFDs, testing for the presence of water, checking signage to ensure that the proper price is displayed on all signs, and checking the quality of the fuel to ensure proper product designations. Violations are issued for equipment found to be noncompliant with the petroleum law. Petroleum equipment repairmen are required to obtain a license from MDAC and report all adjusted devices to the Division.



- Registered fuel distributors: 220
- Petroleum equipment repairmen licensed: 469
- Registered devices inspected: 58,607 devices at 2,631 retail establishments
- Fuel samples obtained: 1,758
- Total individual devices tested: 63,021
- Consumer complaints responded to within 24 hours: 271
- Percent of the complaints for noncompliance wherein corrective action was taken: 33%
- Stop sales enforced:
  - 210 fuel quality violations
  - 152 calibration violations
  - 333 sign violations
  - 141 water violations

Director  
Michael Blackwell  
michaelb@mdac.ms.gov



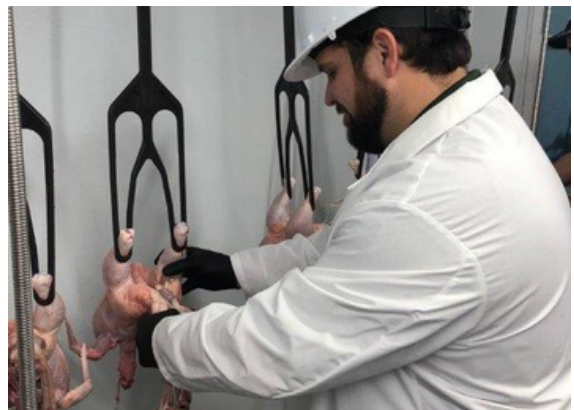
# Meat Inspection

*The Meat Inspection Division provides food safety assurance to consumers of meat and poultry food products.*

The Meat Inspection Division provides inspection services to establishments that prepare meat and poultry food products for entry into intrastate commerce and to some establishments that engage in interstate commerce. The Division inspects all establishments engaged in the slaughtering of food animals and poultry, except for those plants operating under federal inspection. The Division also inspects the further processing of meat, meat-food products, poultry, and poultry food products and their preparation for consumer items. These products are also inspected throughout formulation, packaging, labeling, and distribution to retail outlets. This assurance is becoming more critical as more food products are intended to be consumed with little or no further preparation at home.

MDAC has a cooperative agreement with the USDA establishing a meat and poultry inspection system equal to the federal inspection system. In addition, MDAC has cooperative agreements for the Talmadge-Aiken Program (TA), which permits state employees to provide inspections at federal meat plants as well as the Compliance and Investigation Division Program (CID), which gives authority to inspect businesses that handle meat and poultry for law compliance.

- Pounds of red meat inspected: 31 million
- Pounds of poultry inspected: 52 million
- Other inspections: 3,592 rabbits and 11,566 quail
- State meat plant licenses issued: 32
- Meat plants inspected through the Talmadge-Aiken program: 28
- Rendering companies licensed: 9



Director  
Dr. B. Nicole Hodges  
nicoleh@mdac.ms.gov

# Weights and Measures

*The Weights and Measures Division regulates the use of weighing and measuring devices used in commerce to ensure consumers are treated fairly in the marketplace.*

The Weights and Measures Division inspects and tests scales and measurement equipment used in commerce to ensure compliance with state laws and equity in the marketplace. Division inspectors make routine inspections on all types of commercial weighing devices including railroad scales, vehicle scales, livestock scales, hopper scales, floor scales, bench scales, and those used to weigh precious metals and stones like gold, silver, and diamonds. Inspectors conduct package inspections to verify the net contents of packaged commodities and price verification inspections in businesses that utilize UPC scanning systems. The Division also investigates complaints involving weighing and measuring devices.

The Division licenses livestock facilities, livestock auctioneers, pulpwood facilities, bonded weighmasters, scale service companies, and repairmen that install and repair weighing or measuring devices within the state of Mississippi.

## Moisture Meter Testing Laboratory

The Mississippi Moisture Meter Laboratory provides testing and inspection of devices used to measure the moisture content of agricultural products offered for sale, processed, or stored, using standard methods set by the USDA. The Moisture Meter Laboratory also compiles grain standards used in the inspection of grain moisture meters tested in the state. The laboratory is located in Sardis, Mississippi.

- Actively inspected scales: 4,405
- Heavy capacity scales inspected: 1,073
- Intermediate scales inspected: 4,596
- Railway scales inspected: 60
- Livestock scales inspected: 155
- Dairy farm milk tanks calibrated: 24
- Weighmaster inspections conducted: 78
- Pulpwood/timber inspections conducted: 136
- UPC inspections conducted: 140
- Oven tests conducted: 140 (Corn 38, Rice 16, Wheat 51, Soybeans 35)
- Moisture meter tests conducted: 337



Director  
Brent Bowman  
[brent@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:brent@mdac.ms.gov)



# Metrology Lab

*The Mississippi Metrology Laboratory tests, calibrates, and certifies measuring devices used in commerce for accuracy.*

The Mississippi Metrology Laboratory tests, calibrates, and certifies weighing and measuring artifacts used to test commercial devices for accuracy by industry and state regulatory officials.

The Regulatory Services Bureau maintains the Mississippi Metrology Laboratory located in Lorman on the campus of Alcorn State University. The lab is accredited for the testing of mass and volume by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The accreditation allows the Lab to provide certification and calibration services for government, commercial businesses, and private entities. This certification allows registered service agents and MDAC to test all weighing and measuring devices for accuracy used in commerce.

- Gene Robertson was named Chair-elect of the National Conference on Weights and Measures Board of Directors.

Director  
Gene Robertson  
[gene@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:gene@mdac.ms.gov)





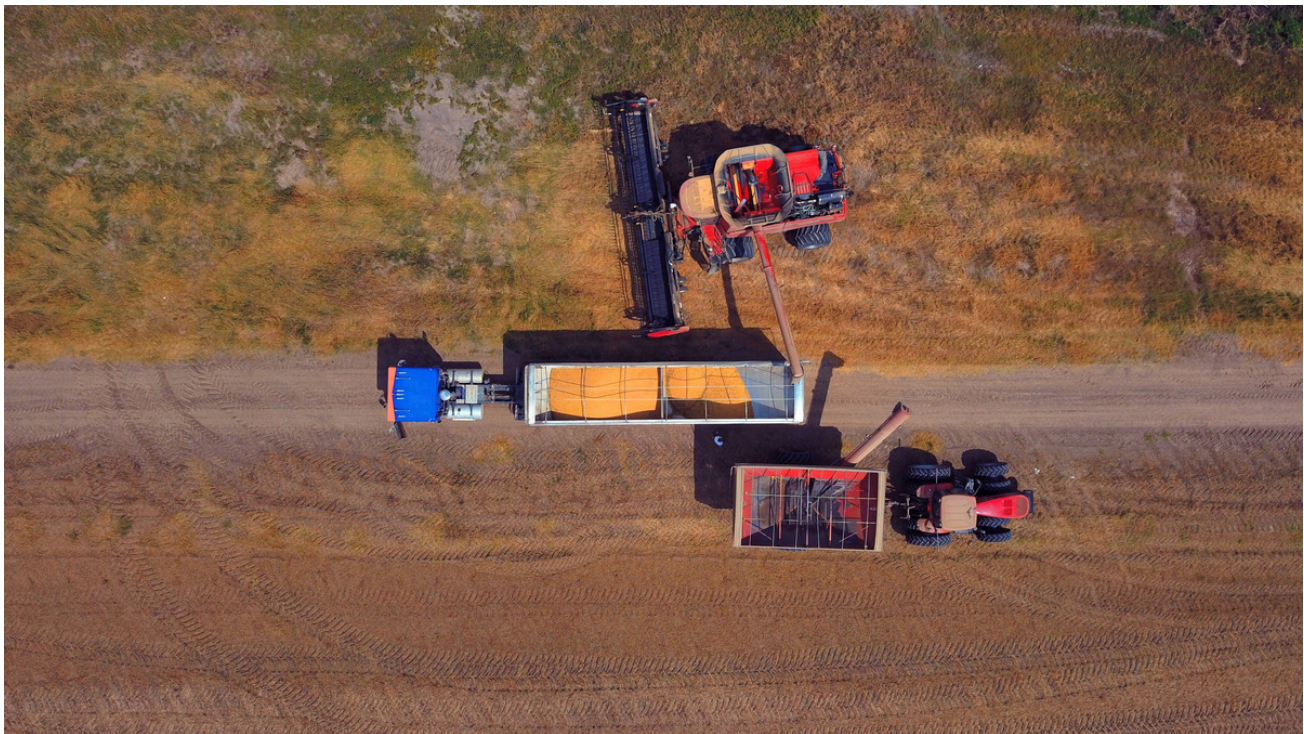
# Grain Dealers and Warehouses

*MDAC's Bureau of Regulatory Services licenses grain dealers and grain warehouses in the state of Mississippi.*

Mississippi law requires grain dealers and grain warehouses be licensed by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, unless they hold a license from the federal government.

The Mississippi Grain Dealers Law requires dealers who purchase grain directly from producers to be licensed and bonded. Operations or individuals who are not licensed are prohibited by law from purchasing grain from producers.

Warehouses that store grain for the public in Mississippi are required to be licensed pursuant to the Grain Warehouse Law, unless the warehouse is licensed under the United States Warehouse Act. Grain warehousemen must be bonded for financial and storage obligations, and they must maintain sufficient assets to cover potential losses. Bonding requirements of the law range from a minimum of \$15,000 to a maximum of \$1 million.



**In 2023, Mississippi produced more than \$2.4 billion in grains including soybeans, corn, rice, and wheat. Soybeans were the largest produced grain with a value of more than \$1.5 billion produced.**

- Grain dealers licensed: 42
- Grain warehouses licensed: 10

Director  
Gene Robertson  
[gene@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:gene@mdac.ms.gov)





# Legal Division

*The Legal Division represents and provides advice to all divisions within the Department.*

The Legal Division's attorneys provide a wide variety of legal advice and services to the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. This Division also represents the Mississippi Board of Animal Health, the Mississippi Land, Water & Timber Resources Board, and the Mississippi Livestock Show.

Services to the Department include:

- Prepares and files agency regulations and drafts proposed legislation.
- Represents the agency in administrative hearings and litigation, including the filing of complaints, briefs, and orders.
- Drafts, reviews, and negotiates agency agreements and contracts. This includes service, rentals, events, entertainment, livestock shows, law enforcement/security, sponsorships, promotion boards, food service and all third party contracts.
- Responds to public records requests and any associated litigation.
- Responds to subpoenas for witnesses and records.
- Handles personnel and employment issues, including terminations, demotions, suspensions, and reprimands.
- Represents agency employees at depositions and files answers to garnishments.
- Files liability claims forms with the Mississippi Tort Claims Board.
- Represents the agency in automobile collision cases, collections, zoning, and grain licensure litigation.
- Handles all seed arbitration hearings, slaughter house, gasoline/petroleum, and retail food violations.
- Reviews and drafts RFPs for bids and procurement law issues.
- Drafts emergency declarations.
- Researches constitutional law issues.
- Handles intellectual property issues.
- Conducts legal research, prepare letters and memos, and advise all divisions of the agency on day-to-day matters.

General Counsel  
Rebecca Wilson  
[rebecca@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:rebecca@mdac.ms.gov)



# Information Management

*The Information Management Division provides information technology services to MDAC staff.*

The Information Management Division (IMD) provides information technology and services to all employees of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce as well as provides technical and network support, application development/systems support, and strategic planning services for both MDAC and the Mississippi Board of Animal Health.

IMD plays a critical role in aligning information technology with the agency's business goals, providing the infrastructure resources to support the agency's communication and decision making, and exploring emerging technologies to promote agriculture and commerce in the state.

- Agency Help Desk tickets resolved: 2,293
- Installed new HP Laptop computers for Petroleum division employees.
- Provided GIS services for the Timber Division, agriculture transportation, Wild Hog Control Program, and various other mapping applications.
- Created Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program system for public application of benefits.
- Created Mississippi Local Food Purchase Assistance Program web-based application process and food bank reporting system.
- Fairgrounds AgNet contract database system published fully in production.
- Published new website for the Timber Division.
- Purchased and implemented new Teal drones to meet legislative regulations pertaining to Chinese made drones.
- Modernized MS Board of Animal Health website.
- Fully converted BPI Pesticide registration system to AgNet with additional reporting and decommissioning of previous system.
- Completed project to modernize first floor conference room AV system.
- Converted MS Agriculture & Forestry Museum website from Umbraco to Wordpress.
- Created new Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) web site.
- Updated various Mississippi Fairgrounds webpages including Fairgrounds, Trade Mart, Equine Center, and MS State Fair.
- Created new Dixie National Rodeo & Livestock show website.



# Information Management Continued

- Created new MS Agriculture Mental Health awareness website.
- Created new Farmers Market AgNet management system.
- Developed new AgTourism AgNet with map and management system.
- Setup Youth Council application process.
- Developed Keith Killebrew online scholarship application.
- Maintained Photos and Videos SharePoint site to store multimedia content for cataloging and sharing digital media.
- Setup and manned booth for MDAC drone usage at the National Aerial Drone Competition hosted by the USCG.
- Assisted ITS with upgrade of MMB and Seeds SQL server databases.
- Upgraded timesheet reporting application to include additional management functions for supervisors to report on second level employees.

- Created MDAC Guest Wi-Fi at BPI office in Starkville and the Farmers Market.
- Configured MDAC Trade Mart Network in parts of Coliseum.
- Upgraded fiber connectivity between Trade Mart and livestock barns.
- Coordinated with ITS to convert from pure message to proof point to update email filtering.
- Provided Internet connectivity for McCain's Meat Processing in Sandy Hook, MS.
- Provided dedicated network connectivity in Coliseum for ESPN Network to broadcast and provide support for their scoreboard controller.
- Upgraded BPI Inspectors' cellphones.
- Deactivated 14 mobile hotspots. BPI Inspectors now use their phones as mobile hotspots/tethering to connect their tablets and laptops to internet.
- Provided stable internet connectivity for MSU live radio broadcast.



## Provided the following Drone /Multimedia coverage:

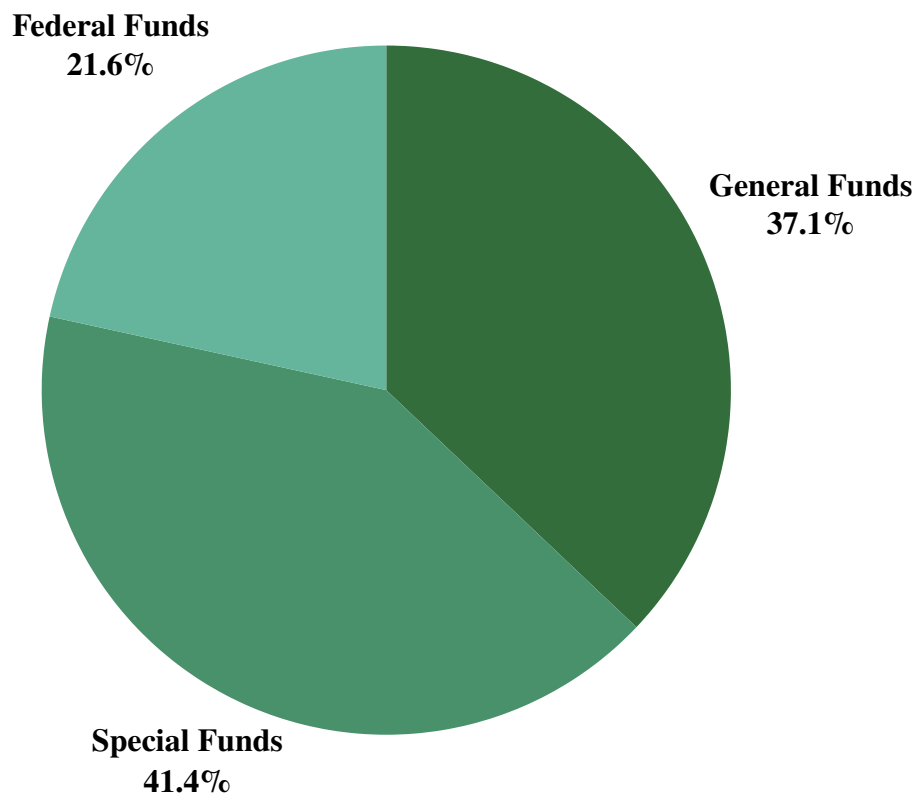
- Provided maps for events at Fairgrounds including Dixie National Rodeo and MS State Fair as well as documenting new parking lot needs.
- Support of marketing publications by providing aerial data of various farms and Genuine MS® partners.
- Aerial data for Wild Hog Control Program of pastureland destroyed by rooting of hogs.
- Photography and video services for various MDAC, Ag Museum, and Fairgrounds events.
- Provide photography for the "Hands of MS Agriculture" magazine feature.

Director  
Jason Price  
jasonp@mdac.ms.gov

# Revenues and Expenditures

**Total Revenue: \$23,378,900**

## Sources of Revenue



General Funds	\$8,667,348	37.1%
Special Funds	\$9,668,651	41.4%
Federal Funds	\$5,042,901	21.6%

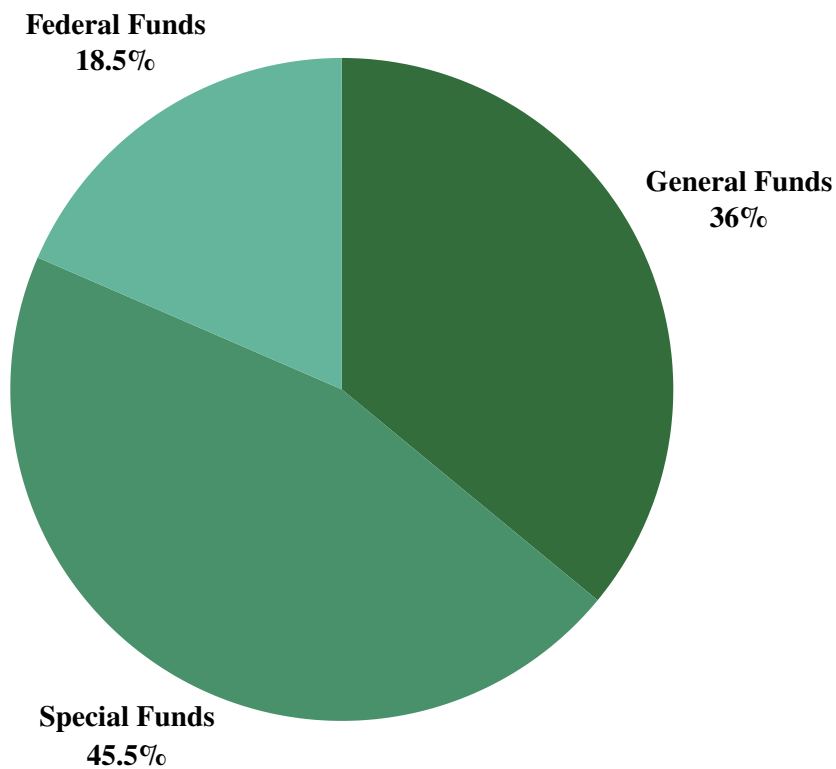


# Revenues and Expenditures

Continued

**Total Expenditures: \$24,095,040**

## Classification of Expenditures by Funding Source



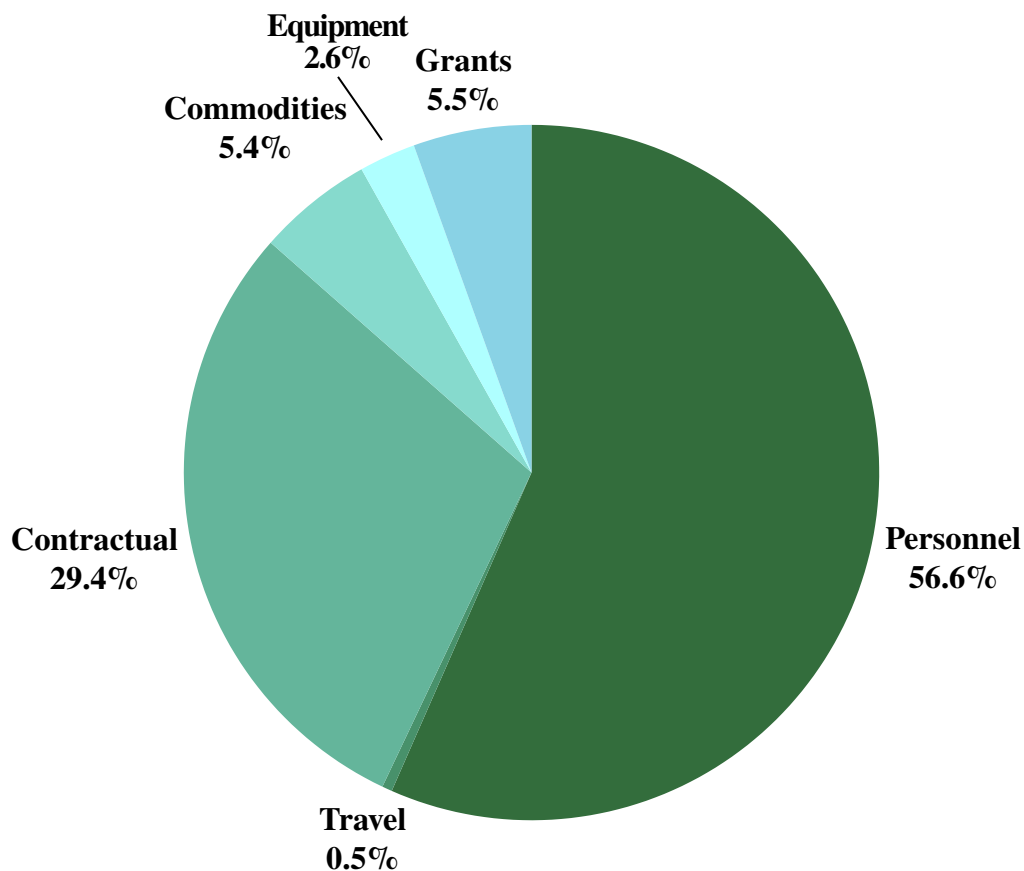
General Funds	\$8,667,348	36%
Special Funds	\$10,972,837	45.5%
Federal Funds	\$4,454,855	18.5%

# Revenues and Expenditures

Continued

**Expenditures: \$24,095,040**

## Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories

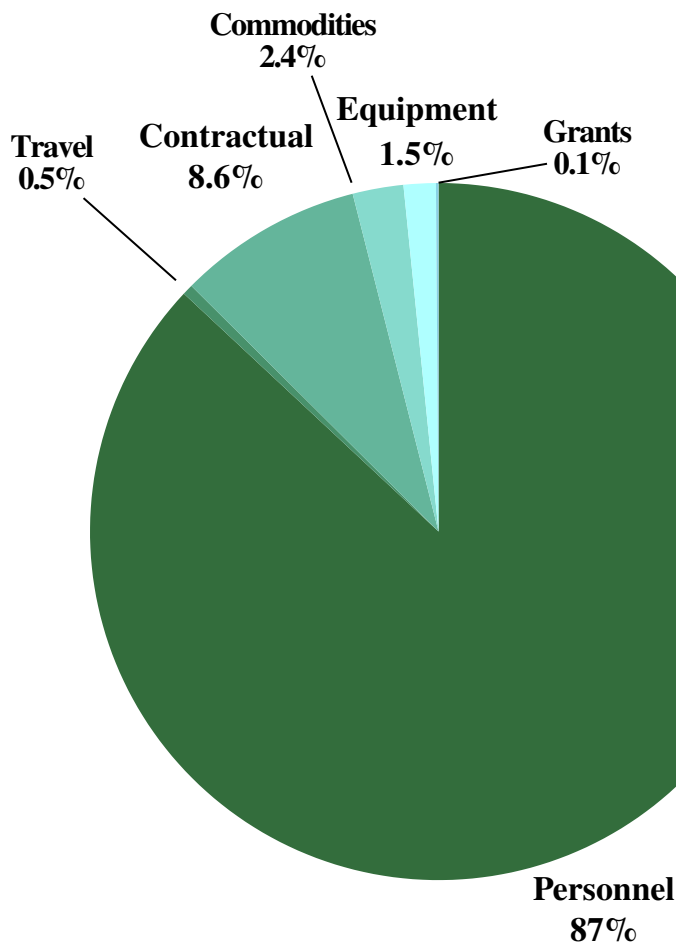


Personnel	\$13,634,111	56.6%
Travel	\$113,015	0.5%
Contractual	\$7,094,383	29.4%
Commodities	\$1,294,419	5.4%
Equipment	\$634,983	2.6%
Grants	\$1,324,129	5.5%



## General Fund Expenditures: \$8,667,348

### Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories



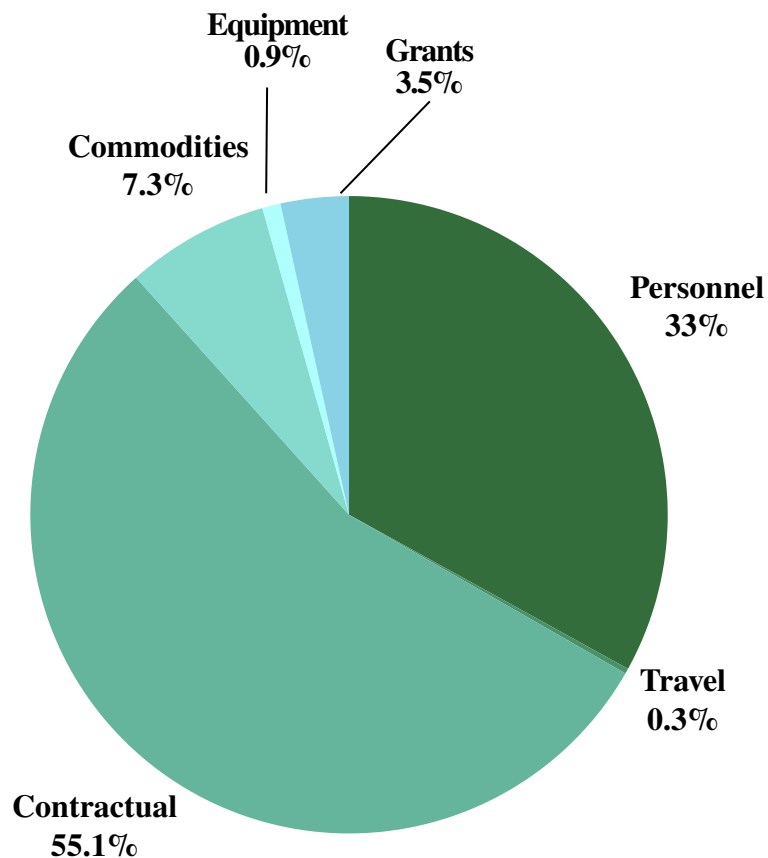
Personnel	\$7,536,852	87%
Travel	\$42,820	0.5%
Contractual	\$744, 059	8.6%
Commodities	\$204,054	2.4%
Equipment	\$129,177	1.5%
Grants	\$10,386	0.1%

# Revenues and Expenditures

Continued

## Special Fund Expenditures: \$10,972,837

### Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories

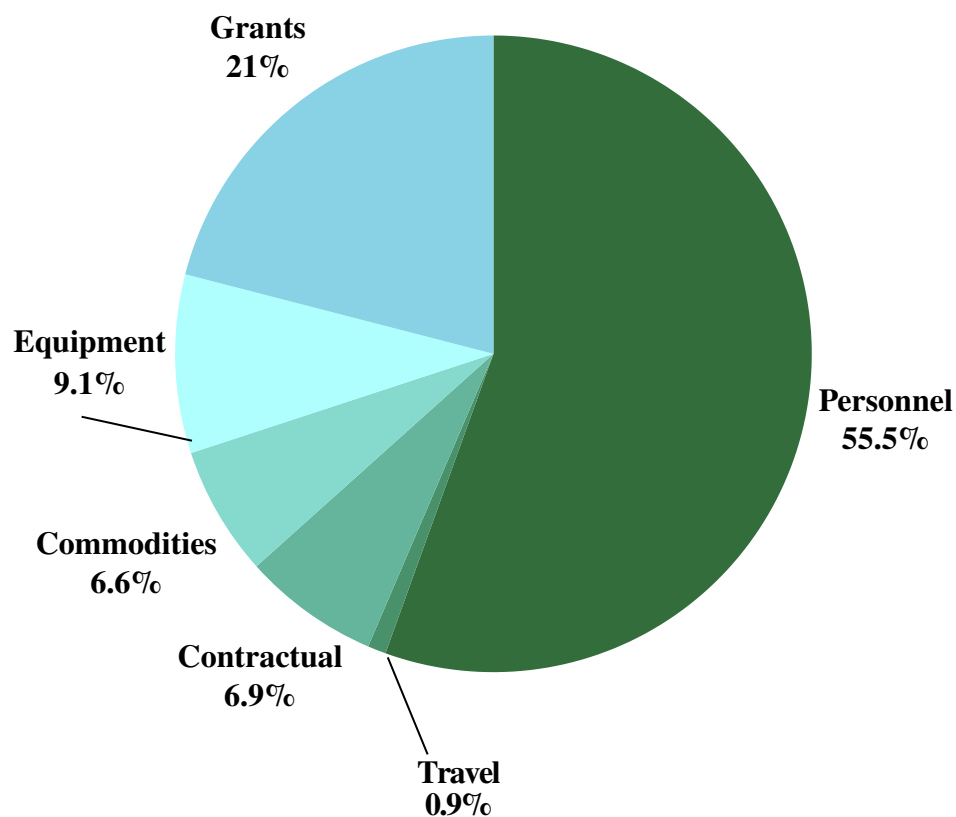


Personnel	\$3,624,418	33%
Travel	\$28,874	0.3%
Contractual	\$6,041,637	55.1%
Commodities	\$796,849	7.3%
Equipment	\$101,855	0.9%
Grants	\$379,204	3.5%



## Federal Fund Expenditures: \$4,454,855

### Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories



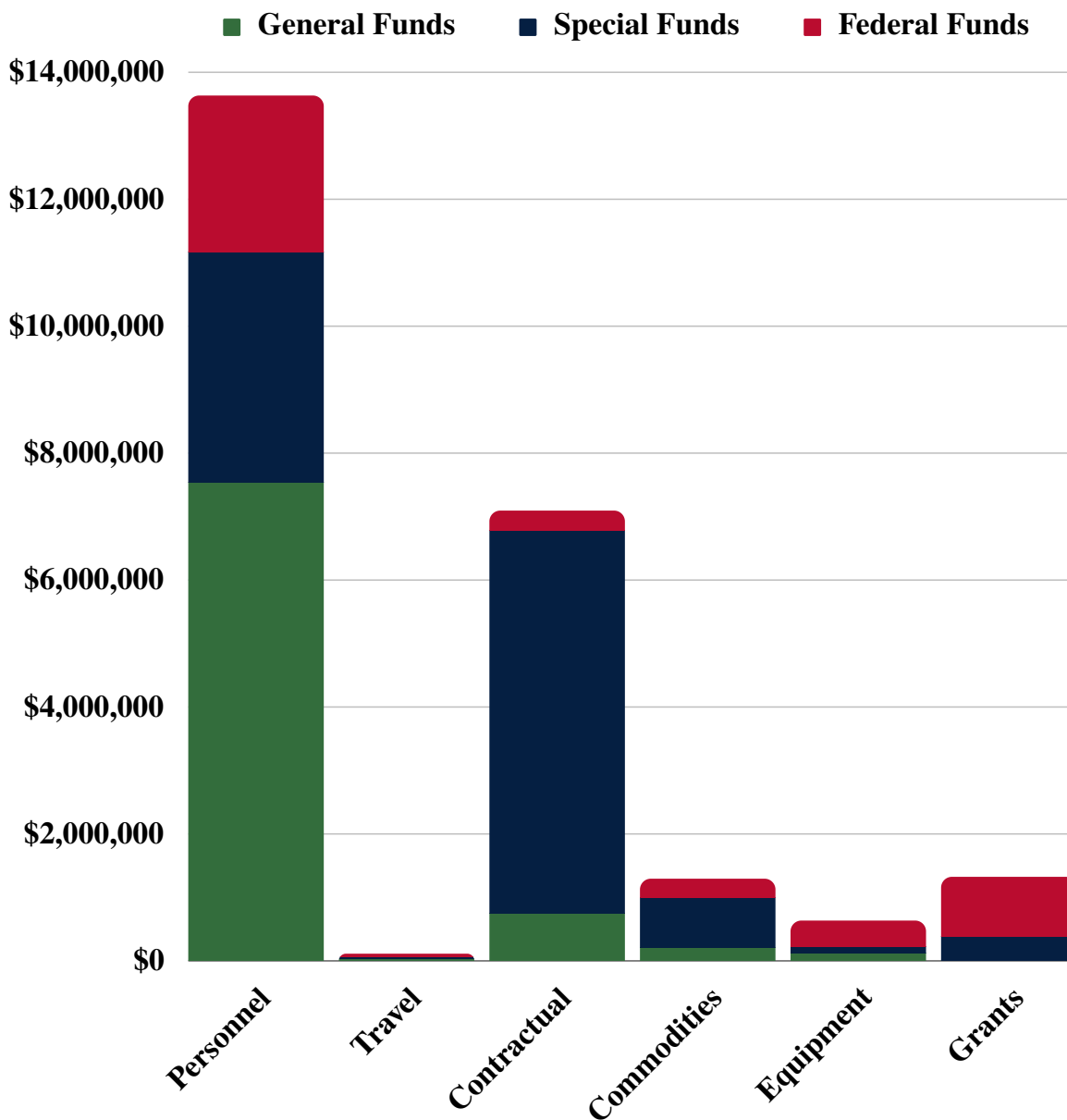
Personnel	\$2,472,841	55.5%
Travel	\$41,321	0.9%
Contractual	\$308,687	6.9%
Commodities	\$293,516	6.6%
Equipment	\$403,951	9.1%
Grants	\$934,539	21%

# Revenues and Expenditures

Continued

**Expenditures: \$22,786,431**

## Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories





Growing A Better Tomorrow

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE  
& COMMERCE

Andy Gipson, Commissioner



@msdeptofag



@MSDeptofAg



Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce



121 North Jefferson Street  
Jackson, MS 39201

Phone: 601-359-1100  
Fax: 601-354-6290

webmaster@mdac.ms.gov  
www.mdac.ms.gov