



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

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **MDAC Hosts Freshly Picked Podcast Featuring Growing Seasons with Special Guests from Calhoun, Chickasaw and Choctaw Counties**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Today, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) will release its latest Freshly Picked podcast. The fifth episode featuring growing seasons and favorite varieties includes special guests from Calhoun, Chickasaw and Choctaw Counties.

Listeners can tune in to the “Orange You Glad It’s Harvest Season” episode today at 9:30 a.m. at [www.msfreshlypicked.com](http://www.msfreshlypicked.com) and on all major podcast platforms.

Sylvia Clark, co-owner of Clark Farms and the Tater Shed in Vardaman; Caleb Englert, president of the Mississippi Sweet Potato Council, vice president of the National Sweet Potato Council and owner of Englert Farms in Houston; and Aaron Stovall, owner of Dry Bottom Farms & Nursery in Weir, held conversations with Host Claude Nash on a number of topics.

For over 50 years, Clark and her husband have supplied their Tater Shed with crops directly from the farm and sell their sweet potatoes by the box. Being from Vardaman, which is known as the “Sweet Potato Capital of the World,” Clark is sincerely proud of the work she and other Mississippi farmers do in order to provide for our state, nation and beyond. Mississippi currently ranks third in the U.S. in sweet potato production, earning \$92 million in 2023 alone.

Englert described the preparation and effort that goes into producing a successful harvest. On average, Englert Farms grows approximately 120 to 140 acres of sweet potatoes each year, and 70 percent of that crop is certified organic. Englert said their growing season starts near the end of February and into early March so they can harvest in the fall. He also talked about how his granddaddy would harp on being prepared, saying “you have got to plant the potato to get the plant, and plant the plant to get the potato.”

In addition to sweet potato farming, this Freshly Picked podcast explores pumpkin growing, the benefits of agritourism and farming traditions. Stovall and his wife, Emily, manage a green-house and cattle

operation, and grow seasonal produce and specialty crops at their farm, Dry Bottom Farms & Nursery. This time of year, their most popular commodity is pumpkins. Stovall currently grows 20 different varieties of pumpkins, including the classic orange pumpkin associated with the fall season and Halloween. His farm is also registered with MDAC's Mississippi Agritourism Program and currently features a pumpkin stand, hayrides, a petting zoo, corn pit, rock climbing wall and other kid-friendly activities. This "Fall Fun on the Farm" experience is open to the public every weekend throughout the fall season. Hear about all these unique stories and much more by visiting [www.msfreshlypicked.com](http://www.msfreshlypicked.com).

The Freshly Picked podcast series, developed by MDAC, will feature 24 episodes and include specialty crop farmers, experts, entrepreneurs and/or chefs as they tell the stories behind their farms, businesses and the unique products they offer. Listeners can find new episodes every Thursday through February 2025 at [www.msfreshlypicked.com](http://www.msfreshlypicked.com), Spotify, Apple Podcasts or other major platforms.

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**Photo attached.**



**The latest episode of MDAC's Freshly Picked podcast, titled "Orange You Glad It's Harvest Season," airs today at 9:30 a.m. Pictured L-R: Sylvia Clark, co-owner of Clark Farms and the Tater Shed in Vardaman; Caleb Englert, owner of Englert Farms in Houston; and Aaron Stovall, owner of Dry Bottom Farms & Nursery in Weir.**