



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 7, 2024

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MDAC Hosts Christmas-Themed Freshly Picked Podcast Featuring Christmas Tree Farmers from Attala and Newton Counties

JACKSON, Miss. – This week’s Christmas-themed episode of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce’s (MDAC) Freshly Picked podcast featuring special guests Wendy Ellis of Red Bird Farms in Attala County and Michael May of Lazy Acres Farm in Newton County airs today at 9:30 a.m. at www.msfreshlypicked.com and on all major podcast platforms.

The episode, titled “A Christmas Tree for Thee: The Stories and Traditions of the Mississippi Farmer,” includes conversations on maintaining tree farms, passing on traditions from generation to generation, and connecting with the local community. Ellis and May also share personal anecdotes and business insights from past experience.

As owner of Red Bird Farms in Kosciusko, Ellis and her husband started their diverse operation, which includes “choose and cut” Christmas trees, in 2018. She starts off by sharing the interesting story about how their farm got its unique name and goes on to discuss the process of starting a Christmas tree farm in Mississippi. Ellis also describes the multiple events and festivals hosted at their farm throughout the year, and how it brings the community together.

May purchased the family farm located in Chunky from his parents in 2001. His parents first planted Christmas trees at Lazy Acres Farm over 40 years in 1980. Since then, their operation has grown and continues to involve the next generation of Mays. Today, May and his daughter, Mikayla Carey, work together on the farm, ensuring other families can make memories together. May says he wants Lazy Acres to continue to educate and entertain, but mostly, he hopes visitors will enjoy the special experience of picking out a Christmas tree and turn it into a lifelong tradition.

About this episode, Podcast Host Claude Nash said, “If you’re a farmer yourself or looking for a few tips on how to pick out the best Christmas tree this holiday season, give this episode a listen and discover what it means to be a part of a long tradition of Mississippi specialty crops.” Tune in today at 9:30 a.m. by visiting www.msfreshlypicked.com or on any major podcast platform.

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, Spotify, Apple Podcasts or other major platforms.

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Photo attached.



The latest episode of MDAC’s Freshly Picked podcast, titled “A Christmas Tree for Thee: The Stories and Traditions of the Mississippi Farmer,” airs today at 9:30 a.m. Pictured L-R: Wendy Ellis, owner of Red Bird Farms in Kosciusko; Michael May, owner of Lazy Acres Farm in Chunky; and Claude Nash, podcast host and editor of the *Mississippi Market Bulletin*.