

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
**AGRICULTURE
& COMMERCE**
FISCAL YEAR 2024
**ANNUAL
REPORT**





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A Message from Commissioner Andy Gipson

This has been a busy year at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC). MDAC staff has been working hard on behalf of all Mississippians. As we like to say, “The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce touches the daily lives of all Mississippians.”

With rising costs of everything from groceries to energy, many families are struggling to keep food on the table. This is also being felt by our farmers and ranchers. Record inflation, high input costs, high interest rates, an agricultural trade deficit, and continuing low prices for most agricultural commodities are making it almost impossible for our farmers to farm and will result in many being forced out of business or making the decision not to farm in 2025. In times such as this, our responsibilities of ensuring that consumers are getting what they pay for and working with lawmakers to provide solutions to these challenges through the implementation of strong policies become even more important.

During FY 2024, we delved into the issue of foreign owned farmland in Mississippi. Farmland is the most important asset to agriculture. Pursuant to House Bill 280 of the Mississippi Legislature’s 2023 Regular Session, the Study Committee on Foreign Purchase of Farmland, which I served as Chairman, released a report containing the Committee’s findings and recommendations for the Mississippi Legislature for the 2024 Session.

Expanding market opportunities for Mississippi’s agricultural commodities is vital to the growth of our largest industry, agriculture. I traveled to India on a USDA Agribusiness Trade Mission to promote Mississippi’s agricultural products. We launched the new Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program to strengthen the local food supply chain. In March 2024, we broke ground on the new Genuine Mississippi Agricultural Market Complex, Mississippi’s first-ever local food supply, storage, and distribution hub led by the private sector.

I am extremely proud that we accomplished this and more with 67 percent of our expenditures coming from special and federal funds rather than state funds. You can read more details in this 2024 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.

Sincerely,



Andy Gipson, Commissioner



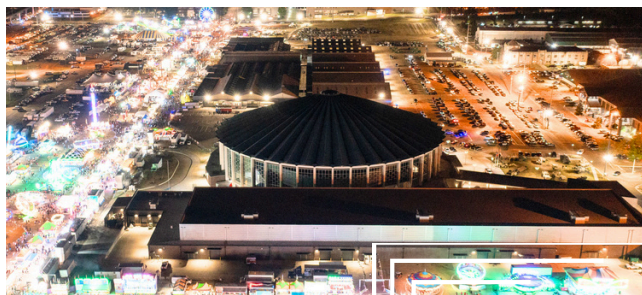
In addition to overseeing the responsibilities of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, duties of the Commissioner include leadership through service on the following boards:

- 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 Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund, Board of Trustees (ex officio)
- Mississippi Livestock Show



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

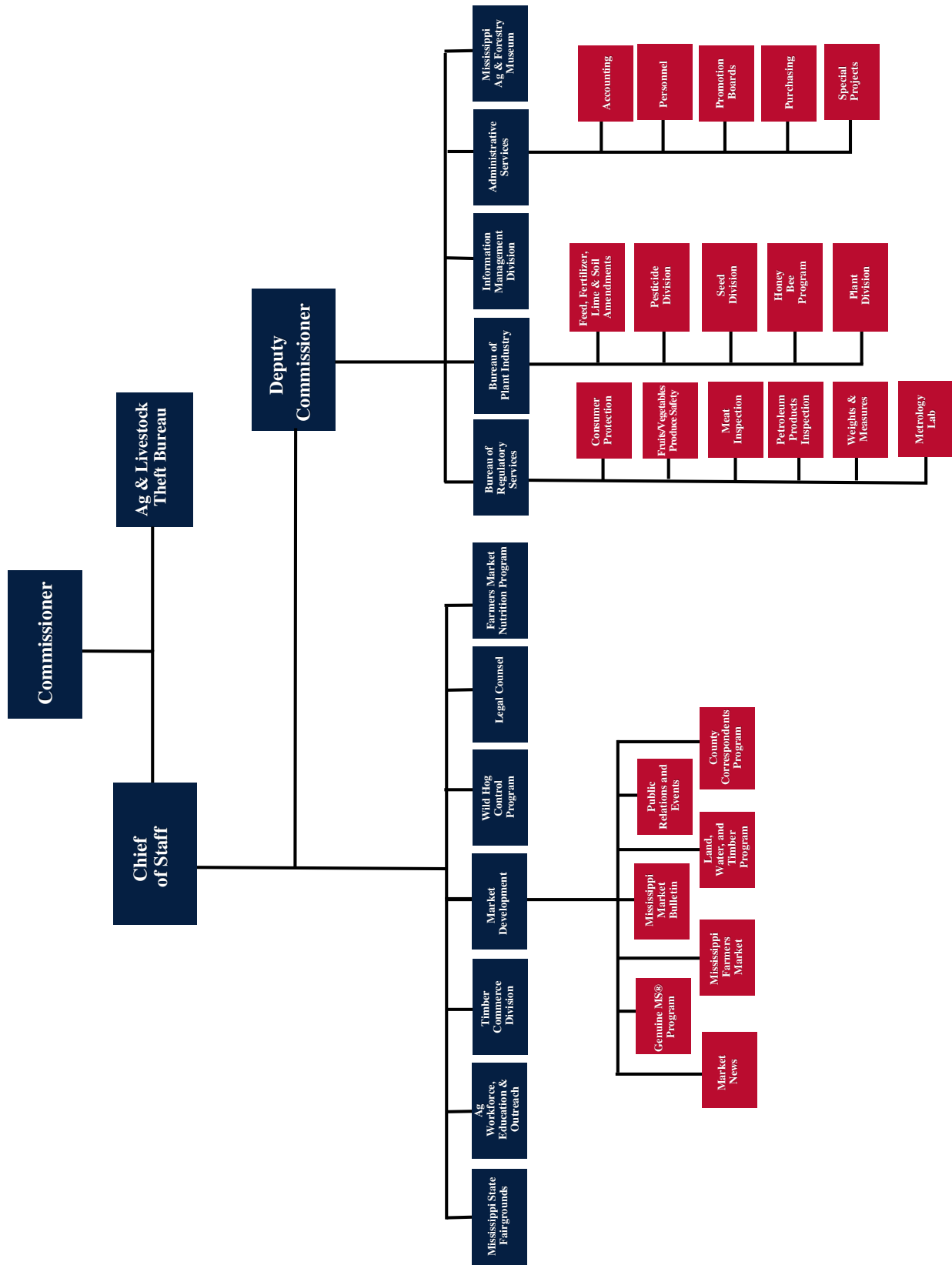
 Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce

Contact MDAC
601-359-1100
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

\$9.04 Billion* of crops and commodities produced in Mississippi in 2024
 *farm-gate value



FARMS
34,100 in Mississippi

FOREST
19 Million forest acres in Mississippi




ACREAGE
10.3 Million farm acres in Mississippi

NATIONALLY
Mississippi ranks in the top 25 nationally in 14 ag commodities





CATFISH
Nation's #1 producer with 32,900 water acres in production

WORKFORCE
17.4% of the state's workforce is employed in a job directly or indirectly related to agriculture





EXPORTS
\$1.2 Billion of agricultural exports

WAGES
Agriculture accounts for \$7.16 Billion in direct wages and \$18.18 Billion in total wages




TAXES
Agriculture contributes \$7.82 Billion in business taxes

OUTPUT
Agriculture provides \$34.15 Billion in direct output and \$80.5 Billion in indirect output



Mississippi Top 10

Mississippi's Top Commodities Based on Cash Receipts

 1. Broilers \$3.82 Billion	 6. Corn \$373.8 Million
 2. Forestry \$1.48 Billion	 7. Catfish \$213.8 Million
 3. Soybeans \$1.28 Billion	 8. Hay \$170.7 Million
 4. Cotton \$496.1 Million	 9. Rice \$167.9 Million
 5. Cattle \$481.9 Million	 10. Specialty Crops \$115.4 Million

Mississippi Ag Exports

Top Trading Partners

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

Top Traded Commodities

1. Cotton
\$715.6 Million
2. Forest Products
\$191.2 Million
3. Poultry Meat & Meat Products
\$148.5 Million
4. Other Feeds & Fodders
\$41.4 Million
5. Seafood Products
\$37.3 Million

\$1.2 Billion total value of Mississippi exports in 2023

Sources: Mississippi State University (2024 Data); USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service, Global Agricultural Trade System Online; (2023 Trade Data); Feeding the Economy (2024 Report)

Executive Summary

MDAC FY 2024 Annual Report (July 1, 2023- June 30, 2024)

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 at 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 235 cases with a reported value of over \$3,359,635 and recovered \$2,119,829 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 15,500 pesticide products for sale; conducted 24,380 tests on seeds; inspected more than 60,317 petroleum devices; tested more than 4,378 active weighing devices and scales; issued over 2,040 retail food establishment licenses; and inspected 27 million pounds of red meat and 47 million pounds of poultry this fiscal year.

Through the agency's Market Development Division, more than \$2,238,179.73 were distributed through grant funds provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Market Development Division also implements several promotional programs specifically designed to increase awareness of Mississippi's ag products and agricultural-related businesses. International trade, 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 230 employees work from offices located in Jackson, Mississippi State University, Alcorn State University, Sardis, 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 agricultural 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 30,000 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.

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.



Market Development Continued

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, 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 97 agritourism operations in the state in FY 2024.

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 32 markets in FY 2024. MDAC hosted 75 farmers market managers, main street associates, and others at the annual Farmers Market Manager Workshop to network and discuss pertinent farmers market issues and solutions. MDAC staff hosted a virtual Farmers Market Manager Workshop with 21 participants to discuss data collection and promoting Certified Mississippi Farmers Markets.

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. In April 2024, MDAC implemented a social media campaign with videos to create awareness among the public. MDAC also joined with the Garden Club of Jackson with an exhibit at the State Capitol.



As part of MDAC's outreach efforts, a catfish cook-off was held between the House and Senate Agriculture Committee members as part of a National Ag Day celebration (left). MDAC participates in trade shows across the state such as the annual Magnolia Beef and Poultry Expo (right).

Market Development Continued

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 India to promote Mississippi's agricultural commodities. MDAC staff met with Consul Generals from Israel and India and the Ambassador to Romania to discuss potential trade opportunities.

MDAC hosted a delegation with Mississippi State University's International Institute. Representatives from Niger, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Ghana engaged in discussions about Mississippi's unique and diverse agriculture industry.

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 assisted in coordinating the ATO New Product Showcase and FOOD EX Japan, both held in Tokyo, Japan. In addition, MDAC staff coordinated the SUSTA pavilion at the Summer Fancy Food Show in New York City. Four Mississippi companies participated in SUSTA's cost-share program to explore new markets. Twelve Mississippi companies participated in SUSTA's global event activities.



Genuine Mississippi Marketing Complex

In March 2024, Commissioner Gipson, along with Rankin County and City of Brandon officials, broke ground on the new Genuine Mississippi Agricultural Market Complex, located off Highway 18 in Brandon. The complex will be Mississippi's first ever local food supply, storage, and distribution hub led by the private sector.

The complex will feature the full farm-to-table experience for retail consumers whether shopping for fresh farm-raised produce in season, high quality meat products, or frozen or dried products for cooking at home. Visitors will also be able to enjoy a delicious fresh-cooked meal of Genuine MS® products. Additionally, the Genuine Mississippi Market Complex will include commercial wholesale food storage and processing components operated by the private sector. The overall site development will be overseen by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce with input and private investments from the agricultural industry and private sector partners.





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 \$429,066.16 in funding to enhance the state's specialty crop industry. MDAC awarded ten projects to universities and producer organizations to administer promotional and educational efforts and research projects in areas specifically related to sweet potatoes, honeybees, leafy greens, peppers, tea, sweet corn, herbs, 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 15 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 75 percent, up to \$750, of the costs incurred to obtain the certification. One farm received reimbursement. This program is funded through the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service.

Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program

MDAC was awarded \$6.8 million through USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance Program. 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. In FY 2024, food purchases from 26 farmers and farmer cooperatives valuing \$1,418,471.56 were distributed through this program.

Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program

MDAC was awarded \$6.2 million through a cooperative agreement with USDA to administer the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Program for the State of Mississippi. Through the RFSI Program, MDAC has made available more than \$5.8 million in funding to build resilience in the middle-of-the-supply-chain and strengthen local food systems. MDAC allocated funds for Equipment Only grant projects and Infrastructure grant projects. Prior to developing an application process, MDAC held three listening sessions to capture agricultural infrastructure needs. Following the release of the application, MDAC held four outreach sessions to educate on the program and application process. MDAC received 24 eligible Infrastructure applications requesting a total of \$29,667,377.90 and 75 eligible Equipment-Only applications requesting a total of \$5,762,888.66. An external Review Committee reviewed the applications and recommended which applications to submit to USDA. MDAC submitted 42 Equipment-Only applications and seven Infrastructure applications to USDA for review and approval.

- Funds awarded to organizations to promote the specialty crop industry: \$429,066.16 to implement 9 projects.
- Farms/Agribusinesses assisted through Market Development Department Programs/Activities:
 - Agritourism Limited Liability Program: 97
 - National Organic Cost-Share Program: 1
 - Farmers Market Certification Program: 32
 - GAP/GHP Cost Share Program: 15
 - Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Projects: 52
 - Attendees of Farmers Market Manager Workshops: 96
 - Certificates of Free Sale issued: 71 to 9 companies

Director
Paige Manning
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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, 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 2024, Genuine MS® focused on growth in membership as well as expanding pop-up events statewide. The Genuine MS® Pop-Up Store participated in six events in the Mid-South. Genuine MS® pop-up events included the Mid-South Farm and Gin Show in Memphis, Ag and Outdoor Expo, Mississippi State Fair, Dixie National Rodeo, and Mistletoe Marketplace.

The Genuine MS® Store, located in the Mississippi Farmers Market, has grown in producer participation and in the number of products inside the store. Approximately 55 members supply over 700 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. As the program has grown, Regional County Correspondent staff have been trained to facilitate connections with active members and represent the program at expos, conventions, and events within their regions. In 2024, leveraging the County Correspondent program, Genuine MS® participated in 40 events, including five new events.



Genuine MS® continues to execute a strategic social media plan emphasizing video content that strengthens member relationships and fosters mutually beneficial partnerships to showcase the best of Mississippi Grown, Raised, Crafted, and Made. By maintaining a consistent posting schedule, the Genuine MS® program tracks quantitative metrics such as reach, impressions, and engagement rates (likes, comments, and shares) while gathering qualitative insights through audience interactions and member feedback, ensuring its content effectively highlights the program's value.

 @genuinems

 @genuinems

 Genuine MS

Director
Lane Milton
lanem@mdac.ms.gov



- Genuine MS® Active Members: 306
- Genuine MS® grossed over \$70,000 in sales at the retail and pop-up stores.
- Genuine MS® now has an online sales presence with the introduction of themed gift boxes available for sale online. Consumers can choose from four gift box options.
- 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 card benefits 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: 74
- Average number of vendors weekly: 41
- Number of seasonal events hosted: 7
- Shoppers: 40,500 annually



@msfarmersmarket



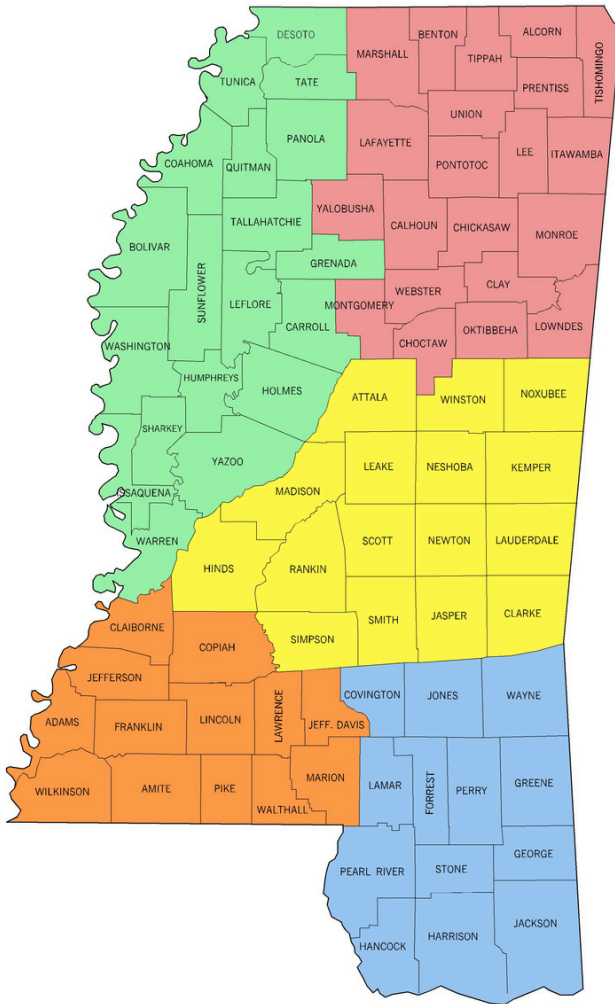
@msfarmersmarket



Mississippi Farmers Market

Manager
Jonathan McCraw
FarmersMarket@mdac.ms.gov

County 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. Staff members attended 28 events in conjunction with the County Correspondents Program.

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

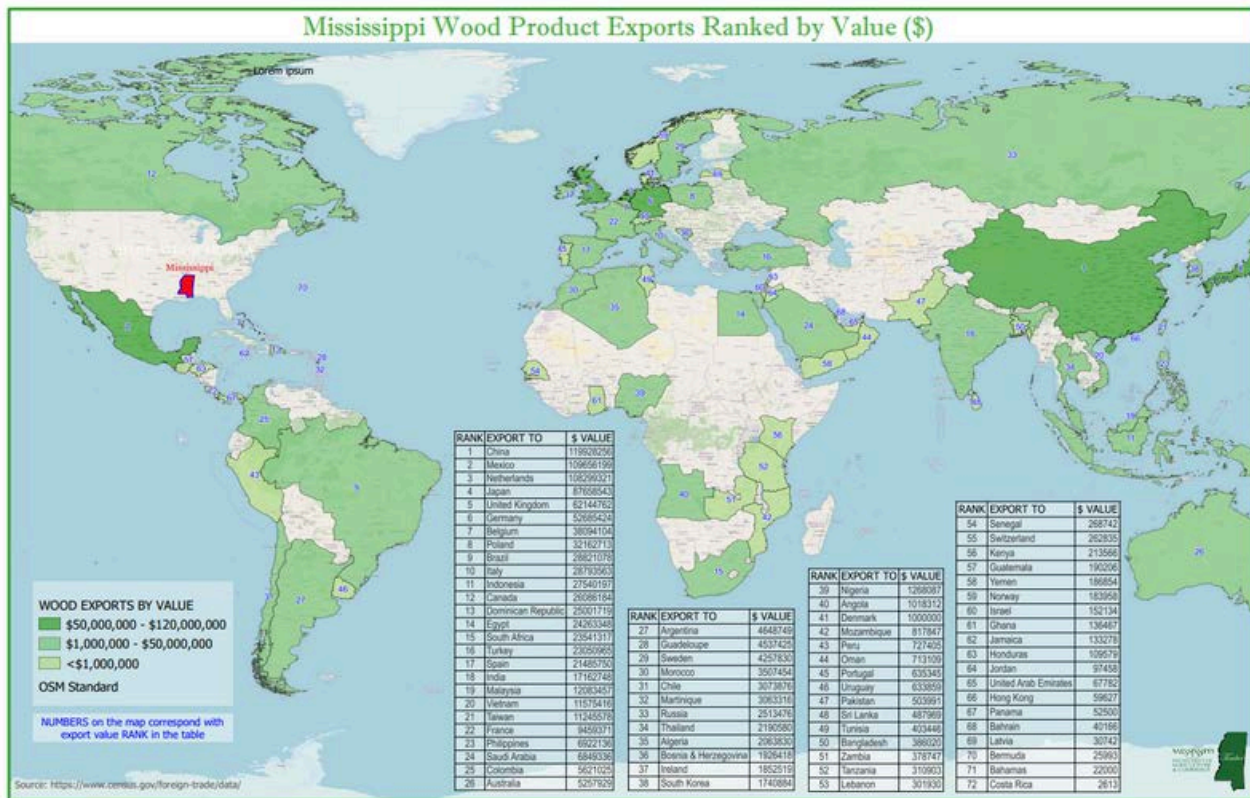
Director
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Timber Commerce

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

The Mississippi Timber website continues to serve as a significant resource for the timber industry, including buyers and sellers. Its purpose is to highlight Mississippi's timber industry with information utilizing reliable data sources. It has proven to be a valuable tool for research, education, economic development, and for marketing Mississippi's timber resources. The website, which can be accessed at <https://timber.mdac.ms.gov/>, contains a variety of maps found in the Timber Data tab. The map featured below shows Mississippi wood products exports to other countries.



Many leads from buyers have been generated through the website. Most are in search of suppliers. These leads are passed on to the suppliers. Economic development leads are also generated and provide opportunity for collaborative work among state agencies, private sectors, and associations to draw more developers to invest in the state. In 2024, the website had 1,365 users from 34 countries with an engagement rate of 56%. As a result of the website, the Timber Commerce Liaison has been invited to participate in logistics studies with the University of Southern Mississippi. She is also a member of the MS DOT Freight Advisory Committee.

Timber Commerce Continued

International Trade

In June 2024, MDAC hosted its third International Inbound Timber Trade Mission. Timber buyers from Poland, Spain, Italy, Great Britain, Vietnam, Dominican Republic, and Mexico participated along with six local timber mills. The trade mission was funded through the Southern United States Trade Association. This mission will result in long-term relationships between the buyers and participating mills. There was great interest in both hardwood and softwood. Rutland Lumber in Collins, Hood Industries in Silvercreek, and REX Lumber in Brookhaven hosted the buyers and consultants for impressive mill tours. Based on surveys from the buyers, the business-to-business meetings produced \$5.5 million in sales with anticipated additional sales of \$10 million.



MDAC hosted its third Inbound Trade Mission with buyers from six countries. The trade mission consisted of timber industry tours and one-on-one business meetings.

- Hosted third Inbound Trade Mission with buyers from six countries resulting in \$5.5 million in sales with additional sales of \$10 million anticipated.
- Expanded global presence through the timber website.
- Participated in university studies relating to the timber industry.
- Timber Commerce Liaison, Ginger Williamson, serves on the DOT Freight Advisory Committee.

Deputy Bureau Director
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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 Agriculture Youth Council

The third cohort of the Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council concluded, comprised of 14 high school seniors from across the state, and the fourth group of 14 members was selected for the 2024-2025 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.



Mississippi State Fair Ag Expo Showcase

The Division facilitated the 2023 Mississippi State Fair Ag Expo in the Mississippi Trade Mart during the 164th 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.

MDAC Internship Program

The MDAC Internship Program employed numerous interns in FY 2024 to work in various areas throughout the Department. The program also welcomed the addition of Laynie Dodson, who serves as this year's FFA State President. 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.



- Partnered with the MDAC Wild Hog Control Program, along with Wildlife Dominion to continue the Mississippi Youth Trapping Corps.

Director
Nick Hall
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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.

In Mississippi, wild hogs are defined as “nuisance animals” by state law. They are non-native animals that cost farmers and landowners over \$60 million annually across the state and at least \$1.5 billion annually across the United States. Wild hogs cause substantial damage to row crops, pastures, and forestlands; carry harmful diseases; and eat the eggs and young of many wildlife species. To aid in the battle against these destructive animals, the Mississippi Legislature passed legislation in 2020 that authorized MDAC to operate programs to fight nuisance wildlife species on private agricultural and forestry land. As a result, MDAC’s Wild Hog Control Program was created.

The WHCP originally began in 2020 as a trap loan program in which MDAC provided “smart” traps to farmers and land managers for trapping wild hogs on private agricultural and forestry lands. Funding was limited to get the program started. However, the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation and the Mississippi Pork Producers Association provided key support for acquisition of traps to initiate the program. Today under the WHCP umbrella, MDAC has 36 “smart” traps available to private land managers across the state. MDAC provides the training necessary to use the traps and technical guidance regarding the most effective methods to trap and control wild hogs. To participate in the trap loan program, applications must be completed and submitted online at www.mdac.ms.gov/whcp. 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 (i.e., 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. Trap application periods occur annually during February, May, August, and November.

Due to the demand and success regarding the WHCP, the program was expanded in 2022 through a partnership among MDAC, Mississippi Future Farmers of America (FFA), and Wildlife Dominion Management, LLC (the manufacturer of HogEye Camera Systems). This partnership created the WHCP Youth Trapping Corps (YTC). The purpose of the YTC is to educate and professionally develop youth members of agriculture-based organizations, such as FFA, in relation to the impact and management of wild hogs at the farm, county, and state level. Students that participate in the YTC provide wild hog trapping services to local land managers while supporting their local FFA chapter. While the concept and plan for the YTC was great, implementation of the program stagnated due to limited funding. That changed for the better in 2023.

In 2023, MDAC received a federal grant to support and expand the WHCP. This funding opportunity was made possible by U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith. A large portion of the grant funding was used to fully implement the YTC. Through the grant, MDAC sub-awarded a total of \$656,000 to 20 FFA Chapters across Mississippi. The sub-awards were used by the FFA Chapters to purchase traps, trapping supplies, and equipment to construct their own traps.



Wild Hog Control Program

Continued

As part of the WHCP, participating FFA Chapters and teachers were trained by MDAC and Wildlife Dominion Management staff on how to trap wild hogs, how to interact with landowners and land managers, how to develop a business plan, and how to interact with agriculture and natural resources professionals. Participation in the YTC allows students to gain work-based learning experience and exposure to service-learning opportunities. A list of participating FFA Chapters can be found at www.mdac.ms.gov/whcp/whcp-youth-trapping-corps. Land managers who want to support FFA and need assistance with wild hog management can contact the nearest participating FFA Chapter in their respective area. MDAC will be recruiting additional FFA Chapters in 2025 to participate in the YTC.

In addition to funding the YTC and to complement the impact of the WHCP, MDAC used the previously mentioned federal grant to implement a trap cost-share program. The cost-share program was designed to provide the most effective traps to private land managers across Mississippi within funding limits. To be eligible, land managers had to submit an online application to MDAC. The cost-share program provided a reimbursement up to \$5,000 per selected application for trapping equipment (cameras, traps, trap gates, trap panels, and trailers to transport traps) and data subscriptions for trap cameras. Applications were scored 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. MDAC received 70 applications and funded 59 applications for a total of \$201,677. For funded applications, an MDAC Nuisance Wildlife Specialist conducted a site visit to verify the presence of and damage caused by wild hogs, and MDAC required a one-year agreement for reimbursement costs.

Since the inception of the WHCP in 2020, MDAC has been responsible for adding more than 100 wild hog traps to the Mississippi landscape and prevented thousands of wild hogs from causing damage to farms and natural resources. Building and expanding the program has been a challenge but well worth the effort. The WHCP would not have been possible without support from the State Legislature, Congress, and Mississippi agricultural associations. During the next phase of the WHCP, MDAC will continue to monitor the number of wild hogs captured during programmatic activities and will continue to provide technical guidance regarding the most effective methods to trap and control wild hogs.

To learn more about the Wild Hog Control Program and to request assistance, visit www.mdac.ms.gov/whcp.



Sounder captured in Grenada County.



Sounder captured in Green County.

Wild Hog Control Program

Continued



Newton County Career and Technical Center students participating in the Wild Hog Control Program Youth Trapping Corps.

- Application periods opened to the public for submission of trap applications: 4
- Traps available for landowners: 36 for each application period
- Wild hogs captured: 1,070 on 45 properties in 27 counties
- Sub-awarded a total of \$656,000 to 20 FFA Chapters to support the WHCP Youth Trapping Corps.
- Sub-awarded a total of \$201,677 for a one-time cost share program (59 sub-awards).
- 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.

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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 benefit cards 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: 9,930
- Value of vouchers redeemed in both programs: \$145,052



Volunteer assisting a Senior FMNP participant at the Mississippi Farmers Market.



The Natchez, Oxford, and Batesville Farmers Market are a few of the markets that participate in the WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs.

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Agriculture and Livestock Theft Bureau

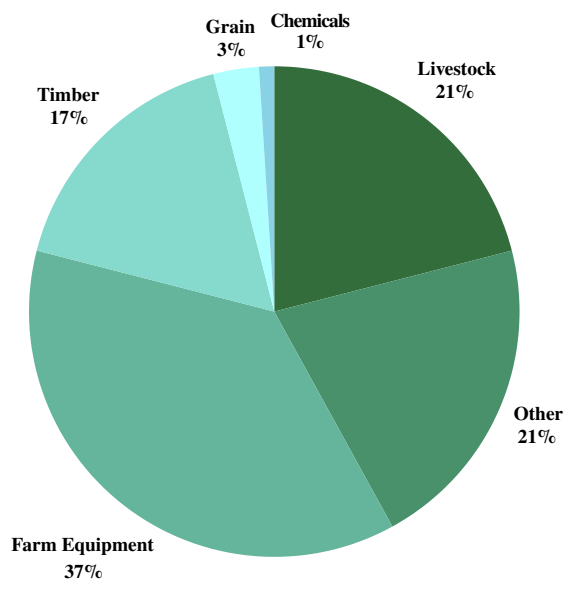
The Mississippi Agriculture and Livestock Theft Bureau assists in the investigation of farm and agriculture-related crimes.

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 12 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 document that is distributed to law enforcement members throughout the state.



Percentage Distribution of Dollar Value of Reported Crimes



- Cases investigated: 235 cases with reported property value of \$3,359,635
- Cases resolved: 74 cases with recovered property value of \$2,119,829
- Recovery rate: 63%
- Brands issued: 1,415 brands which generated approximately \$7,075 over a five year period



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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 15-16, 2023
Attendance: 484

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

Pumpkin Adventure - October 11-14, 18-21, & 25-28, 2023

Attendance: 7,736

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



Harvest Festival - November 7-11, 2023

Attendance: 4,784

- 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 7-8, 2023

Attendance: 1,434

- 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.

Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum

Continued

Spring Farm Days - March 7-9, 2024

Attendance: 1,776

- 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 - March 30, 2024

Attendance: 2,689

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

Night on the Town - May 4, 2024

Attendance: 30

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

Pickle Fest - June 8, 2024

Attendance: 7,383

- 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.



Special Event: 40th Birthday Celebration

On September 9, 2023, the Ag Museum commemorated 40 years of educating the public on the importance of agriculture. Commissioner Gipson, along with other museum officials, replicated the grand opening ceremony lead by former Agriculture Commissioner Jim Buck Ross on the opening day of the Museum, on September 20, 1983.

Church Restoration

The rotten wood on the exterior of the church was removed and replaced with new cypress boards. The entire exterior of the church was then prepped and painted. The windows were replaced for the entire church. Some of the shutters were repaired and others had to be replaced due to rot and damage.

Garden Restoration

The rose gardens on the grounds fell into disrepair due to blight and disease. The gardens were taken over by the Garden Clubs of Mississippi. The diseased roses were dug up, the beds were reconstructed, and a variety of new plants were planted in what is now called the Museum Gardens. The Hinds Community College Construction Class at the Rankin campus built a pergola in the gardens and repoured the concrete slab. The gardens will also be used as a rental facility for weddings.



Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum

Continued

Siding for Heritage Center

The siding on the Heritage Center was redone. The exterior was rotten, and boards were falling off. With the help of the Museum Foundation, crews removed the old, rotten boards and replaced them with new lumber. The interior battens were replaced, a water proofing membrane was put on them, and the Mississippi grown cypress siding was installed and had a water proofing spray adhered to it.

S-2 Plane and Piper Pawnee

A Snow S-2 plane was added to the National Agricultural Aviation Museum. The S-2 underwent complete restoration and could, and was, flown before being housed at the Museum. The Piper Pawnee was hung in the main lobby of the Heritage Center.

Blueberry Patch

One hundred blueberry bushes, consisting of five varieties, were planted on the grounds. Museum staff brought in soil and pine straw to ensure the blueberries succeeded. An irrigation system was installed to water the bushes. The Blueberry Patch was funded through a donation to the Museum Foundation.

Large Pavilion

The Large Pavilion has been reopened for rentals. The fans and lights have been replaced. The Pavilion will give another outdoor rental facility option.




- Annual Museum visitors: 95,727
- Museum events hosted and attendees: 8 events with 26,316 total attendees
- Private events held: 398

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 @msagmuseum

 @msagmuseum

 Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum

Mississippi State Fairgrounds

The Mississippi State Fairgrounds is a premier venue promoting agriculture, industry, and entertainment for the people of Mississippi.

The mission of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds is to create a safe and vibrant environment where visitors can experience Mississippi's rich agricultural heritage, enjoy premier entertainment, and support the economic vitality and family-friendly atmosphere of the Capital City. Spanning over 100 acres, the Fairgrounds Complex includes a mile-long midway, the Mississippi Coliseum, the Mississippi Trade Mart, the Kirk Fordice Equine Center, 14 livestock barns, and parking for over 7,000 vehicles. The Fairgrounds hosts a diverse range of events from livestock and horse shows to concerts, trade exhibitions, and conventions. Key annual events include the Mississippi State Fair, the Junior League of Jackson's Mistletoe Marketplace, the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo, and Comic-Con.



Highlights of Annual Events:

164th Mississippi State Fair - October 5-15, 2023

Attendance: 525,000+

- Fairgoers enjoyed Mississippi's beloved traditions, including livestock shows, a petting zoo, pig races, and unique fair foods, along with the rides and games.
- Frontier Village featured the Magic Show, a train ride, and, for the first time, the Taste of Dixie National Rodeo.
- MDAC employees offered hot, homemade biscuits at the famous Biscuit Booth.
- The Ag Expo, featuring the Genuine MS® Store and FARMtastic learning center, was located inside the Trade Mart.
- For the first time ever, the Mississippi State Fair hosted a competition to recruit talent for the hit singing show, American Idol®.
- 4-H and FFA youth competed in the various livestock shows.



Mississippi State Fairgrounds Continued

Dixie National Rodeo and Livestock Show
 January 5- February 18, 2024
 Attendance: 50,000+

- Celebrating its 59th year, the Dixie National is the largest rodeo east of the Mississippi River, achieving record-breaking ticket sales of over \$1.3 million. Guests also enjoyed Dixie National Rodeo Days and the Dixie National Steakhouse in the Trade Mart.
- More than 5,000 school children attended a special free rodeo performance featuring Dusty the Clown and professional barrel racing during Kids Day.
- The Dixie National Rodeo Days Expo took place the first weekend of the Dixie National Rodeo, and the Ag & Outdoor Expo took place during the second weekend. 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 was in the Trade Mart Atrium.



New Projects and Enhancements

- In October 2023, Mississippi invested in upgrading the old National Guard Armory, repurposing it as a law enforcement staging area for major events. Enhancements include structural upgrades, new restrooms, office spaces, and climate control. Capitol Police use the facility for daily operations and training.
- New RV and camping facilities were added on the Fairgrounds’ northside, enhancing accommodations for equine events and generating additional revenue.

 @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)
- The 2023 Mississippi State Fair ranked #33 of Top 50 Fairs in North America by Carnival Warehouse.

Events held at Mississippi State Fairgrounds:

- Equine events: 24
- Livestock: 6
- Trade Shows: 39
- Entertainment/Concerts: 16
- Private events: 53
- MDAC hosted events: 29

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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 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 2024, BPI provided updates at meetings held by the following organizations:

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

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

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

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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.

The online Boll Weevil Reporting System provides growers 24-hour access to reporting acreage and assessment. The Bureau continued with its Cogongrass Control Program. 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: 1,027
- Nursery and nursery dealer inspections: 1,350
- Phytosanitary certificates issued for plant material and seed export: 731

Visual surveys conducted:

- Nurseries and nursery dealers: 1,490 surveys state-wide
- Corn: 33 surveys in 8 production fields
- Cotton: 28 surveys in 65 cotton production fields in 5 counties
- Rice: 48 surveys in rice production fields

Other services:

- Traps set for Exotic Bark Beetle: 2,399 within Attala, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Clay, Lamar, Lee, Lowndes, Madison, Neshoba, Oktibbeha, Quitman, and Winston Counties
- Total traps set and screened for exotic species: 3,991
- Commercial sweet potato businesses served: 45 operated by 64 growers
- Acres of sweet potatoes monitored for Sweet Potato Weevil: 30,178 (no positive detections)
- Colonies of honey bees certified: 46,928
- Colonies of honey bees inspected: 5,089

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- 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.



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 Honey Bee 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: 15,500
- Samples collected from products available at retail and distribution outlets to check compliance with state and federal pesticide laws: 254
- Stop-sale orders issued on pesticide products found to be deficient, misbranded, and non-registered: 101
- Special-use registrations (Section 24c of FIFRA) issued on pesticide products: 2
- Emergency exemptions (Section 18 of FIFRA) issued on pesticide products: 2
- Dealers licensed to sell restricted use pesticide products: 251
- Registered technician identification cards issued to persons engaged in professional services such as pest control and weed control services: 2,560
- Licenses and permits issued to persons engaged in professional services: 812
- Aerial licenses issued for agricultural purposes:
 - Agricultural aviation pilots: 204
 - Applicators: 89
 - Aircrafts: 180
 - UAV: 16 Remote Pilots; 9 Applicators; 19 UAV or Drones
- Pest management consultants licenses issued: 158
- Private applicator certificates issued: 2,193
- Commercial applicator certificates issued: 550
- Horticulturist licenses issued: 104
- Tree surgeons licenses renewed and issued: 131

- Inspections conducted:
 - Producer-establishment inspections: 32
 - Marketplace inspections: 714
 - Applicator records inspections: 665
 - RUP dealer records inspections: 202
 - Container/containment inspections: 32
 - Non-agricultural/for cause inspections of pesticide misuse: 26
 - Agricultural/for cause inspections of pesticide misuse: 26
 - Non-agricultural inspections of pesticide use: 1,754
 - Agricultural inspections of pesticide use: 57
 - Worker protection inspections: 24
- Samples collected under the Pesticide Enforcement Program: 70
- 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.
- MDAC established UAV Task Force consisting of stakeholders responsible for staying informed on research, pesticide labels, FAA, and EPA requirements.



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

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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: 2,117
- Seed samples received: 12,566
- Tests conducted on seeds: 24,380
- Official regulatory seed samples collected: 4,069
- Official regulatory seed samples found to be in violation of the State Seed Law: 60
- Special tests conducted on seed such as cool germ test, accelerated aging, and chemical tests: 6,813
- Seed Lab Director was nominated as First Vice-President of Association of American Seed Control Officials and was elected the 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.

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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: 19,941 products from 1,434 feed distributors
- Feed samples collected: 1,393
- Fertilizer products registered: 9,431 products from 1,179 fertilizer distributors
- Fertilizer samples collected: 536
- Lime products registered: 186 products from 86 distributors
- Lime samples collected: 125
- Rebuilt the Feed, Fertilizer, Soil and Plant Amendment Registration on-line system providing industry 24-hour access to registration and renewals.



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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 2024, the colors of Jackson State University were selected for inspection stickers.



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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.



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- Retail food establishment licenses issued: 2,040
- Retail egg licenses issued: 96
- Mobile Vendor licenses issued: 56
- Inspections conducted:
 - Businesses inspected: 4,313
 - Retail scale inspections: 6,834
 - Retail food sanitation inspections: 2,725
 - Net weight inspections: 32,616
 - Disposition of garbage inspections: 2,725
 - UPC price verification inspections: 1,573
 - Shell eggs inspected: 32,359 dozen
 - Catfish/Shrimp/Crawfish Marketing inspections: 503
- USDA COOL audits conducted: 55

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: 74
- USDA shipping point inspections performed: 56 semi-truck loads
- USDA Farmers' stock peanuts graded: 24,923 tons
- USDA Peanut A-Flavus chemical testing: 381 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.

Farmers' 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: 266
- Inspections at identified farms performed: 25
- Produce Safety Alliance Grower trainings conducted in conjunction with MSU: 5
- Developed Produce Safety Division publications for grower education.
- Promoted the Produce Safety rule at more than 12 meetings and workshops statewide.
- Total number of farms processed, certified, or exempted in the Produce Safety Program: 673



Bureau Director
Jennifer Thompson
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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: 214
- Petroleum equipment repairmen licensed: 512
- Registered devices inspected: 60,317 devices at 2,627 retail establishments
- Fuel samples obtained: 1,617
- Total individual devices tested: 62,185
- Consumer complaints responded to within 24 hours: 236
- Percent of the complaints for noncompliance wherein corrective action was taken: 36%
- Stop sales enforced:
 - 213 fuel quality violations
 - 287 calibration violations
 - 600 sign violations
 - 159 water violations

Director
Clay Hammons
clayh@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: 27 million
- Pounds of poultry inspected: 47 million
- Other inspections: 2,813 rabbits and 7,532 quail
- State meat plant licenses issued: 31
- Meat plants inspected through the Talmadge-Aiken program: 30
- Rendering companies licensed: 9



Director
Dr. B. Nicole Hodges
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Weights and Measures

500

lb
kg

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.

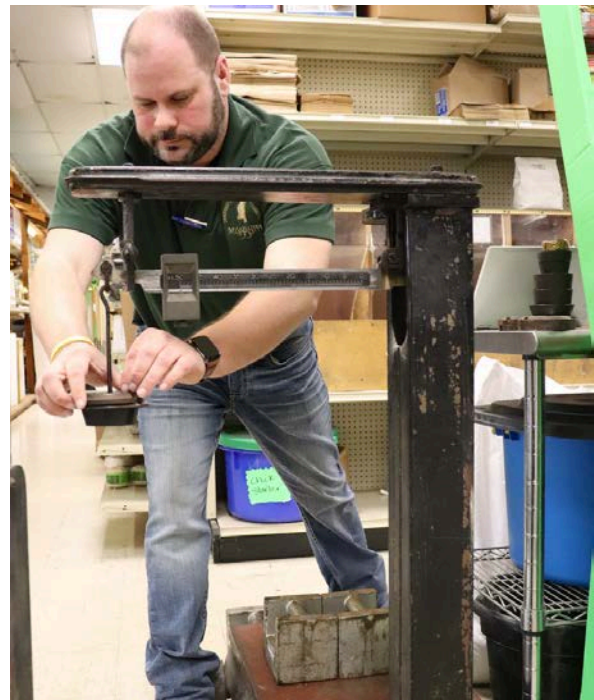
The Weights and Measures Division inspects and tests scales and measurement equipment used in commerce to ensure compliance with state laws and equity in the marketplace. Division inspectors make routine inspections on all types of commercial weighing devices including railroad scales, vehicle scales, 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 was located in Sardis in FY 2024 but is currently located at the Bureau of Plant Industry on the campus of Mississippi State University.

- Active scales: 4,378
- Heavy capacity scales inspected: 892
- Intermediate scales inspected: 5,021
- Railway scales inspected: 52
- Livestock scales inspected: 176
- Weighmaster inspections conducted: 68
- Pulpwood/timber inspections conducted: 117
- UPC inspections conducted: 98
- Oven tests conducted: 292 (Corn 66; Rice 51; Wheat 100; Soybeans 67; Milo 4; Other 4)
- Moisture meter tests conducted: 409



Director
Brent Bowman
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Metrology Lab

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

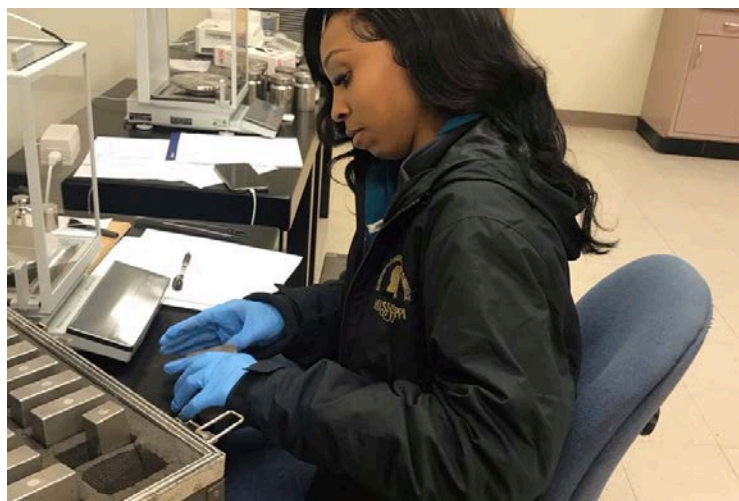
The Mississippi Metrology Laboratory tests, calibrates, and certifies weighing and measuring artifacts used to test commercial devices for accuracy by industry and state regulatory officials.

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 of the National Conference on Weights and Measures Board of Directors.

Director
Gene Robertson
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.



Mississippi produces a variety of grains including soybeans, corn, rice, and wheat. Farmers produced \$373 million of corn on 580,000 acres in 2024.

- Grain dealers licensed: 44
- Grain warehouses licensed: 11

Director
Gene Robertson
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, and 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.

Legal Counsel
Rebecca Wilson
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: 1,104
- Established online Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Signup.
- Created new Wild Hog Control Program Cost-Share webpage.
- Launched new Boll Weevil registration system.
- Published online Brand Book.
- Updated "Saturday at the Mississippi Farmers Market" constant contact list to AgNet vendor listing.
- Launched a new FFLSP registration system.
- Launched new Mississippi State Fair website.
- Created Mississippi Agriculture Safety and Mental Health Awareness website (msaghealth.com).
- Hired and trained two new helpdesk employees.
- Migrated Ag Museum, Fairgrounds, Dixie National Rodeo, and Board of Animal Health websites to new servers hosted in the cloud.
- Created a new Foreign Purchase of Farmland website and provided GIS mapping for graphics.
- Updated Agritourism App and associated website.
- Created AgNet HR PAR forms and workflow processes.
- Implemented ProofPoint email security with ITS.
- Performed IT Enterprise Security audit (NextStep). ITS passed with auditors stating, "It was refreshingly difficult to get in."

Information Management Continued

- Completed IT procurement training.
- Provided GIS services for Timber, Agriculture Transportation, Wild Hog Control Program, RFSI, and various other mapping applications.
- Added switches and networking to provide wireless access in South Ticket office area of Coliseum.
- Added additional functionality to the Certified Farmers Market Website.



Provided the following Drone /Multimedia coverage:

- Near instant maps for events at Fairgrounds including Dixie National Rodeo and State Fair as well as near empty campus.
- Support of marketing publications by providing aerial data.
- Aerial data for Wild Hog Control Program of pastureland destroyed by rooting of hogs.
- Photography and drone footage of Inda Bay Spring Water.
- Photography for Commissioner Gipson swearing in service.
- Genuine MS® product photography for online store and Christmas events.
- Drone, video, and photography coverage of International Timber Trade Tours.
- *Mississippi Market Bulletin* photoshoot.
- Drone and Photography coverage of Landrum's Homestead Genuine MS® spotlight.
- Photography and video services for various museum and fairgrounds events.



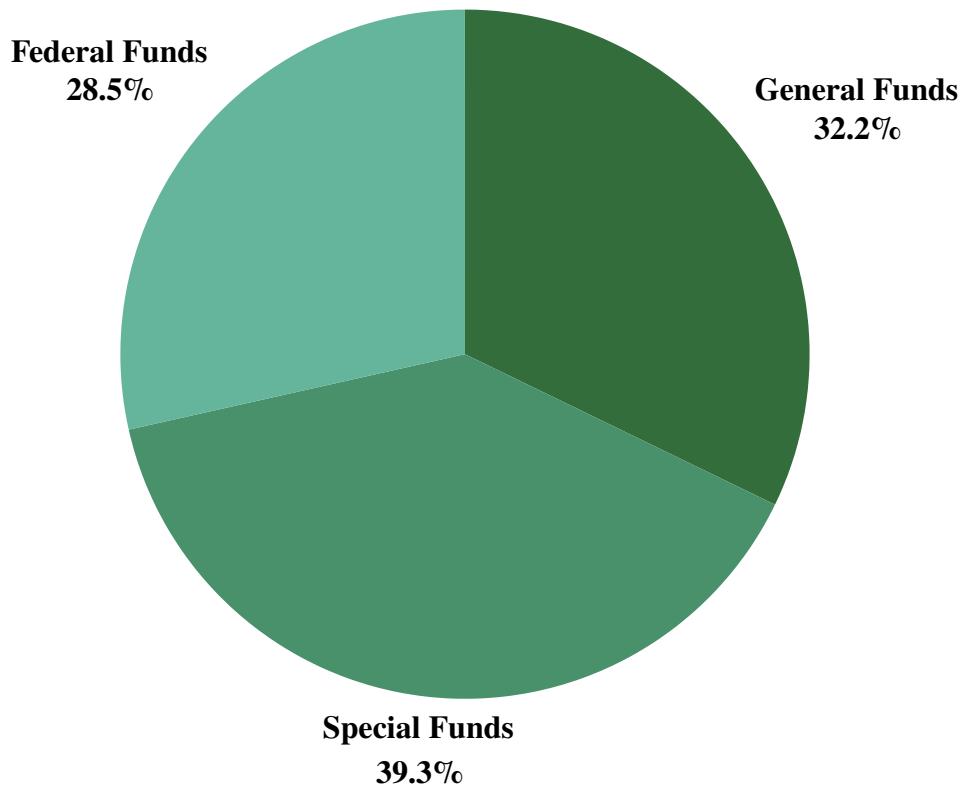
IMD used drones to capture video data such as the wild hog damage in crops (left), and several MDAC web pages were revamped like that of the Mississippi State Fair (right).

Director
Jason Price
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Revenues and Expenditures

Total Revenue: \$25,901,050

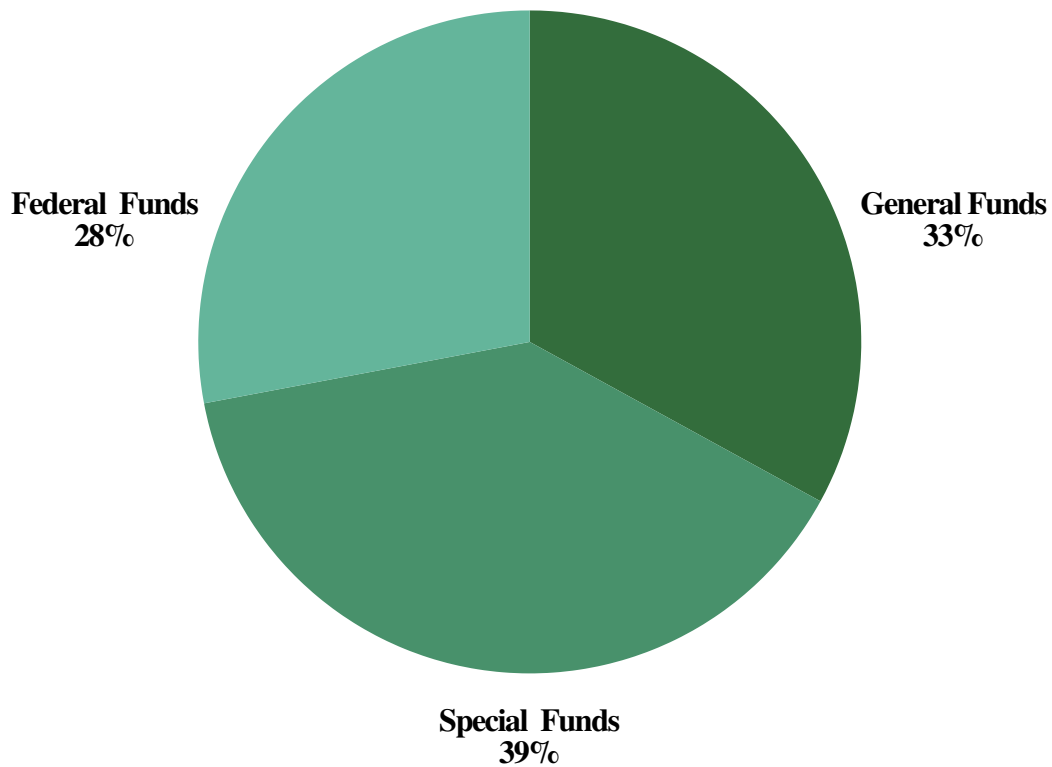
Sources of Revenue



General Funds	\$8,337,822	32.2%
Special Funds	\$10,177,479	39.3%
Federal Funds	\$7,385,749	28.5%

Total Expenditures: \$26,789,983

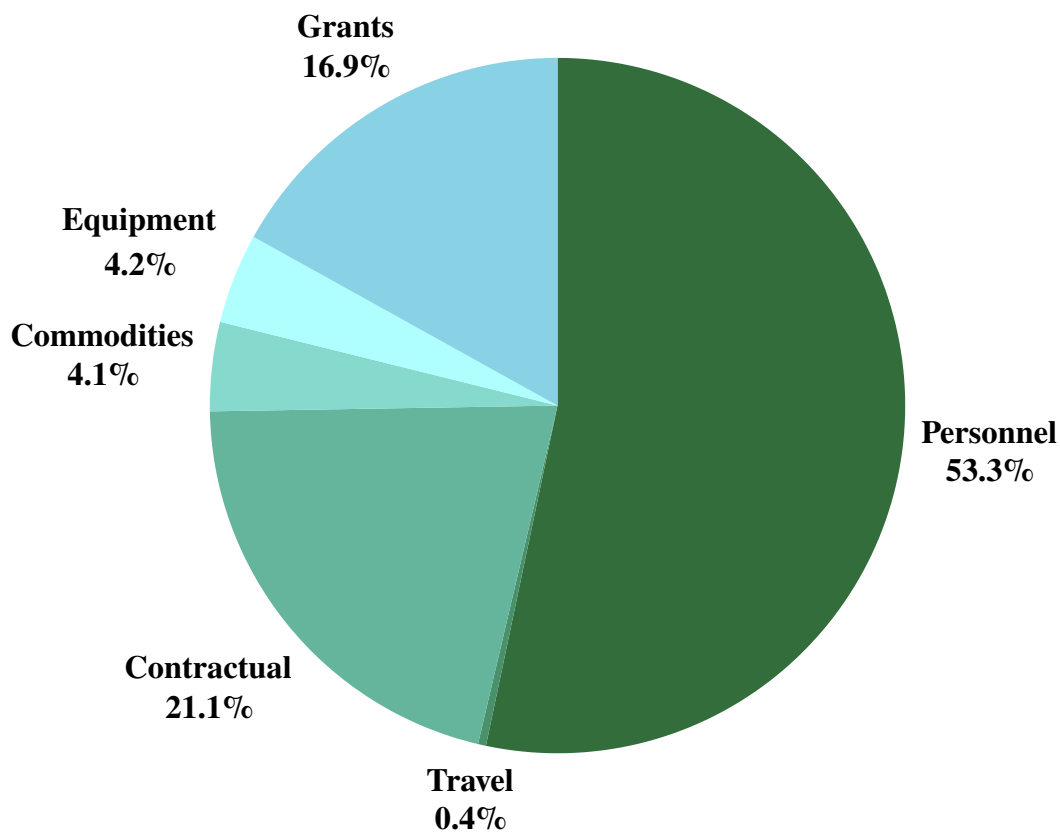
Classification of Expenditures by Funding Source



General Funds	\$8,835,616	33%
Special Funds	\$10,462,086	39%
Federal Funds	\$7,492,281	28%

Expenditures: \$26,789,983

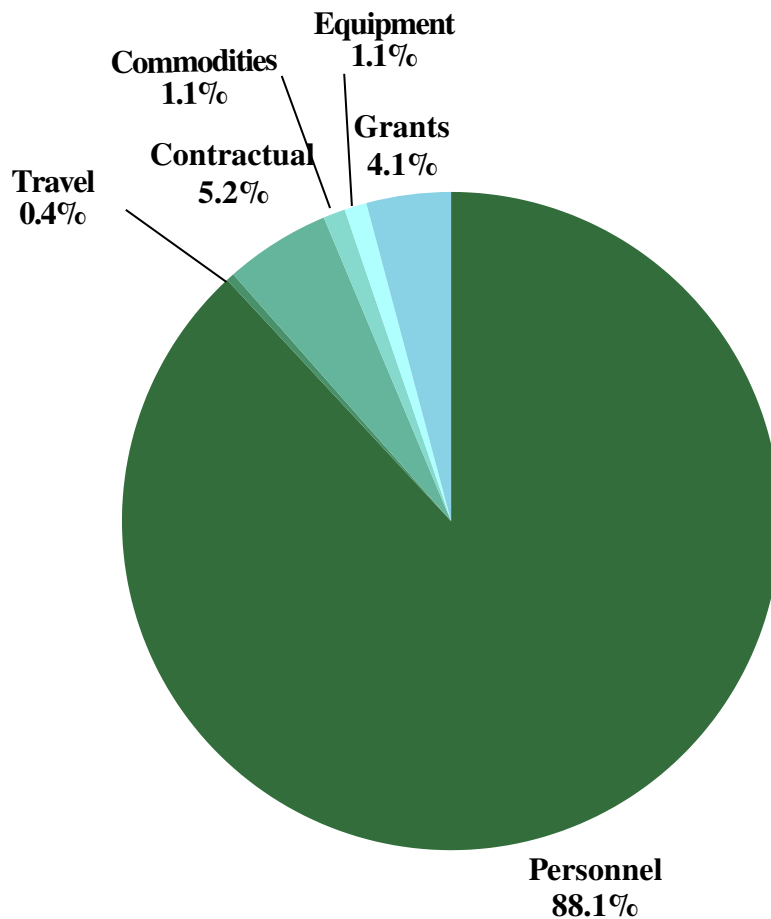
Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories



Personnel	\$14,279,524	53.3%
Travel	\$99,383	0.4%
Contractual	\$5,642,484	21.1%
Commodities	\$1,108,199	4.1%
Equipment	\$1,123,199	4.2%
Grants	\$4,537,194	16.9%

General Fund Expenditures: \$8,835,616

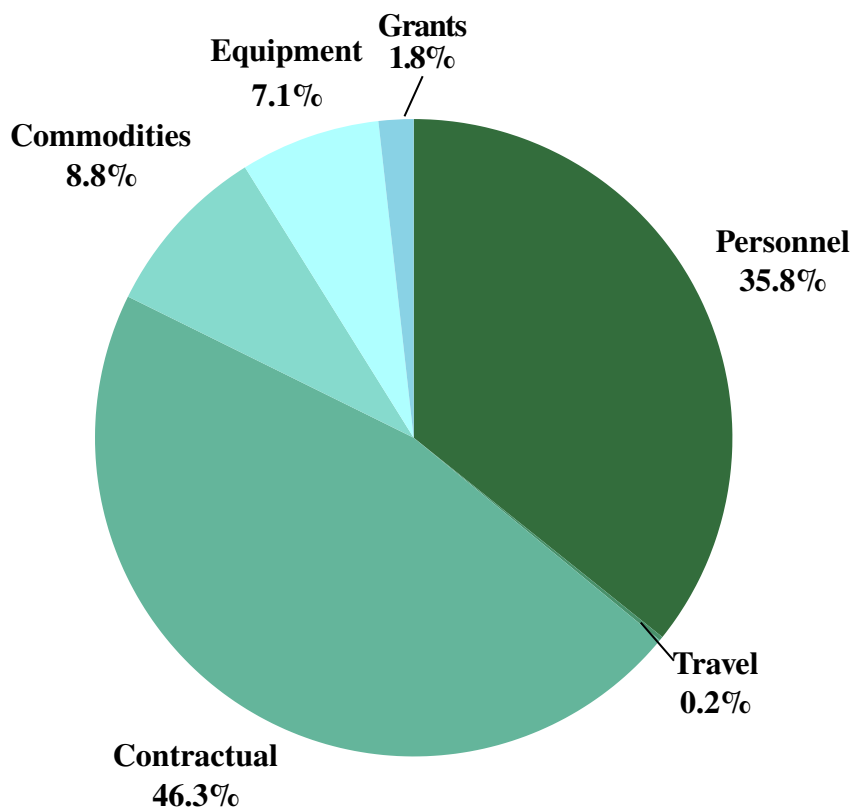
Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories



Personnel	\$7,782,755	88.1%
Travel	\$35,611	0.4%
Contractual	\$458,778	5.2%
Commodities	\$95,421	1.1%
Equipment	\$96,442	1.1%
Grants	\$366,609	4.1%

Special Fund Expenditures: \$10,462,086

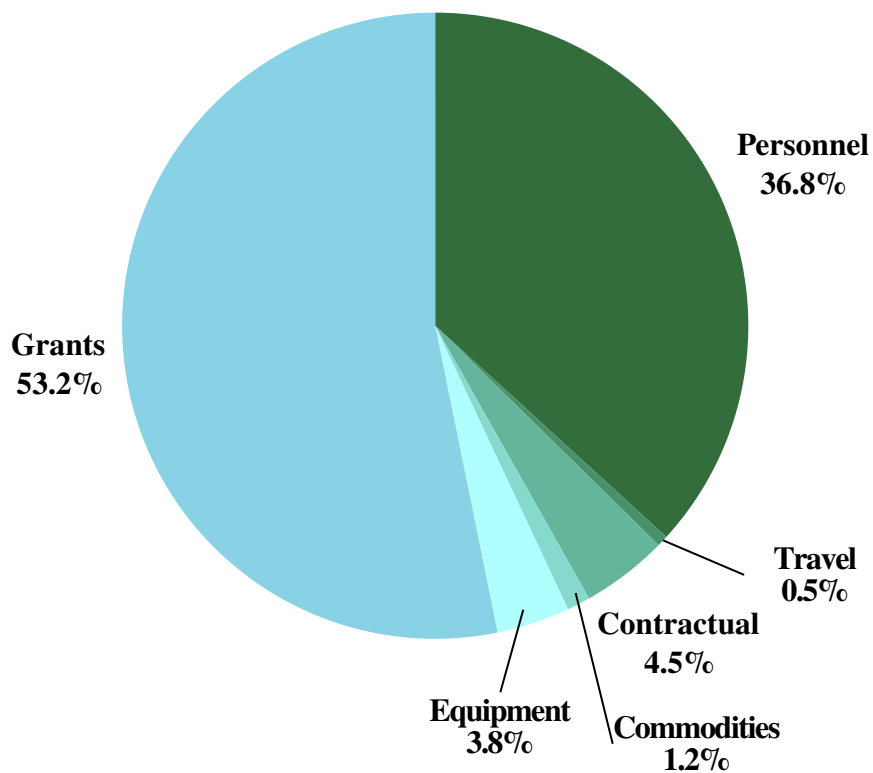
Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories



Personnel	\$3,740,591	35.8%
Travel	\$21,119	0.2%
Contractual	\$4,848,794	46.3%
Commodities	\$922,642	8.8%
Equipment	\$743,864	7.1%
Grants	\$185,076	1.8%

Federal Fund Expenditures: \$7,492,281

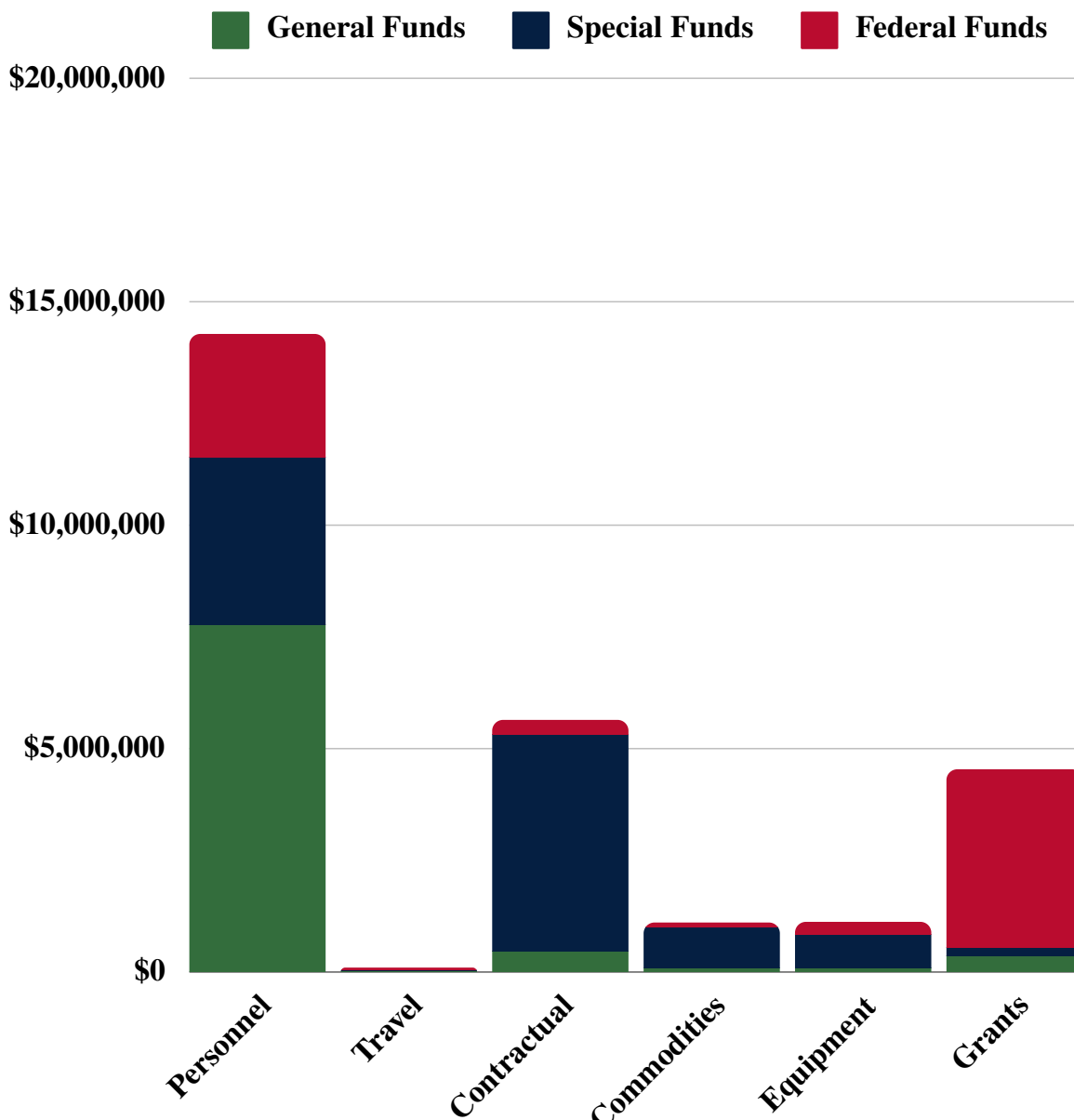
Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories



Personnel	\$2,756,178	36.8%
Travel	\$42,653	0.5%
Contractual	\$334,913	4.5%
Commodities	\$90,136	1.2%
Equipment	\$282,893	3.8%
Grants	\$3,985,509	53.2%

Expenditures: \$26,789,983

Classification of Expenditures by Expense Categories





MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
**AGRICULTURE
& COMMERCE**

Andy Gipson, Commissioner



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