



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

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **2025 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Sets New Record**

***Sales from Dixie National Junior Champions Surpass Previous Record by More than \$100,000***

**STATE FAIRGROUNDS, Miss.** – The Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions set a new record this year. Forty-nine animals were auctioned off with total sales of \$591,287, breaking last year’s record of \$484,010. In addition, 41 scholarships totaling \$85,000 were awarded to Mississippi 4-H and FFA youth.

The Sale of Junior Champions is one of the premier events of the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo. During the sale, the prizewinning livestock of the Champions and Reserve Champions of the Junior Round-Up are auctioned off. This year, 1,269 4-H and FFA members from across Mississippi participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Show, showing 1,941 head of livestock including pigs, sheep, cattle and goats.

Prior to the sale, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson recognized the collaborative efforts of the Mississippi State University (MSU) Extension Service, Mississippi FFA and the Sale of Champions Promotion Committee for making this event a success every year. Commissioner Gipson was joined by Dr. Angus Catchot, Director of the MSU Extension Service; Abby Dugas, Director of the Mississippi FFA Organization; Kelly Tucker, Chairwoman of the Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee; Elliott Fancher, Regional Vice President of Southern AgCredit; and Rorey Lemmel, Owner of the Harper & Morgan Rodeo Company. Two Sale of Champions participants, Layton Varner with Rankin County 4-H and Mallory Duncan with Simpson County FFA, provided remarks on how the livestock program has impacted their lives.

“Our 4-H and FFA livestock shows are the best workforce and leadership development program in the State of Mississippi. When it comes to workforce development, we don’t have to reinvent the wheel. To find hard workers that are committed to developing their education and their careers and lives here in Mississippi, just come to the livestock shows, and especially the Sale of Junior Champions. These students know the value of hard work, and just as important, they are not deterred by hard work,” said Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson. “The Sale of Champions

would not be possible without the support of our partners, Mississippi State University Extension Service and Mississippi FFA, who conduct and manage the livestock shows. I appreciate their dedication and their investment in our young people. Congratulations to everyone on another record year!”

Prior to participating in the Dixie National Junior Round Up, youth livestock exhibitors spend months taking care of and raising their animals. Of the 1,941 head of livestock shown in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Show, 49 animals went on to the Sale of Champions.

“The Sale of Champions is a tremendous opportunity for all of our 4-Hers and FFA youth to come together to promote livestock shows, but it is about much more than that,” said Dr. Angus Catchot, MSU Extension Service Director. “The experience of owning an animal when you are the one responsible for their care, health and growth instills positive attitudes in our youth. In addition, the funds generated through the scholarships and the sale provides college funds for youth across the state, and it gives them an opportunity to contribute to charitable events, which some of the participants are planning to do.”

The Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee has been key to the historic success of this sale for over 56 years. Since the sale began in 1970, the event has continued to grow due to the generosity and efforts of the Sale of Champions Committee members. To date, the Sale of Junior Champions has grossed over \$10 million. Since the first scholarships were granted in 1993, the scholarships awarded to 4-H and FFA members have totaled more than more than \$1.2 million.

Kelly Tucker, Chairwoman of the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee, emphasized the impact that livestock shows have on the youth. “Participating in the livestock shows and projects teaches our young people essential skills such as how to think critically to solve problems, to work as a team, to communicate effectively, to make ethical decisions and how to win and lose with respect. Youth are vital to our state and country’s future and supporting them at the Sale of Champions helps them to facilitate their goals and aspirations,” said Tucker.

The benefits of the Sale of Junior Champions reach beyond the student who raised the animal. The Sale of Champions also benefits those in the community. According to Tucker, many buyers donate meat from the animals purchased through the sale to charitable organizations. Last year, nearly 7,400 pounds of meat was donated to charitable organizations around the state providing more than 24,000 meals to Mississippians.

Southern AgCredit continues to serve as the title sponsor of the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo making it possible to bring this family-center, agriculturally-focused, extracurricular activity to Mississippi’s youth.

“Agriculture in Mississippi is the foundation of our state, and at Southern AgCredit, we know first-hand how much hard work and dedication goes into it,” said Elliott Fancher, Regional Vice President at Southern AgCredit. “We are excited to continue to be the official sponsor of the Dixie National Rodeo, not just as a financial investment, but as a tribute to our agricultural heritage. This event is more than a rodeo—it’s a celebration of our traditions, our rural communities, and the families who make Mississippi agriculture strong.”

To view the press conference prior to the Sale of Champions, visit <https://youtu.be/yrzHaD43GjY>.

The Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo will continue with open livestock shows, equine shows and the Dixie National Rodeo. To purchase tickets to the Dixie National Rodeo, visit [www.ticketmaster.com/search?q=dixie+national+rodeo](http://www.ticketmaster.com/search?q=dixie+national+rodeo). Concert-only tickets for sold out shows must be purchased in-person at the Coliseum Box Office. For more information on the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo, visit [www.dixienational.org](http://www.dixienational.org) and follow the Dixie National Livestock Show & Rodeo on Facebook, Instagram and X.

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**Photos attached.**



**Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson (center) kicked off the Sale of Junior Champions. He was joined by (L-R) Abby Dugas, Director of the Mississippi FFA Organization; Layton Varner with Rankin County 4-H; Dr. Angus Catchot, Director of the MSU Extension Service; Greg Young, Livestock Director with the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce; Commissioner Gipson; Mallory Duncan with Simpson County FFA; Elliott Fancher, Regional Vice President of Southern AgCredit; and Kelly Tucker, Chairwoman of the Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee.**



Layton Varner of Rankin County 4-H with her Reserve Champion Hair Sheep, one of the forty-nine animals sold in the Sale of Champions. The sale animals were sold for a record total of \$591,287, breaking the previous record by over \$100,000. Forty-one scholarships totaling \$85,000 were also awarded. The Sale of Junior Champions is one of the premier events of the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo. During the sale, 4-H and FFA youth exhibitors named Champions and Reserve Champions in the Junior Round-Up, have their prizewinning livestock auctioned off.