



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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**Commissioner Andy Gipson Announces 2025-2026 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council
*Students from Alcorn, Covington, George, Hinds, Itawamba, Jones, Kemper, Neshoba, Oktibbeha,
Panola, and Scott Counties Chosen for Council***

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the members of the 2025-2026 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council. High school seniors Rebekah Schilling and Silas Walker of Oktibbeha County were among the 14 student finalists chosen to serve on the 2025 Ag Youth Council. Rebekah Schilling, daughter of Wes and Jenna Schilling, attends Starkville Academy and Silas Walker, son of Tripp and Catherine Walker, attends Starkville High School.

“I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the outstanding students selected to serve on this year’s Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council,” said Commissioner Gipson. “This recognition is a testament to their dedication and hard work. The future of our workforce lies in the hands of our youth, and through this unique program, our agency is committed to supporting and retaining our talented young people right here in Mississippi, where they can thrive and contribute to the success of our agriculture industry.”

The other high school seniors selected include Trinity Pope of Covington County; Lily Everett of George County; Mason Williams of Hinds County; Rylie Holley of Itawamba County; Maggie Claire Todd of Jones County; Jady Collier of Kemper County; Kalie Carroll, Laney Carroll and John Spears of Neshoba County; Emma Neth of Panola County; and Anna Kate Goree of Scott County. Members were chosen through an application process and were interviewed by a committee of representatives from the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) and other agriculture industry leaders.

The 2025 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council is comprised of 14 high school seniors with an interest in agriculture. The goal of this council is to expose the students to a variety of agriculture career fields and to teach them how to advocate for various aspects of the agriculture industry.

Over the course of one year, council members will visit agricultural companies and organizations; learn about the legislative process and how it affects the agriculture industry; hold discussions with industry professionals; and hone career-development skills. Council members will serve from August 2025 to June 2026 and attend a minimum of four meetings at the MDAC headquarters located in Jackson.

Visit www.mdac.ms.gov/mayc for program guidelines and additional information. Questions regarding the Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council can be submitted to Peyton Pierce at peyton@mdac.ms.gov.

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Photo attached.



Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the members of the 2025-2026 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council. High school seniors Rebekah Schilling (left) and Silas Walker (right) of Oktibbeha County were among the 14 student finalists chosen to serve on the Ag Youth Council.