



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson Introduces Statewide Health Campaign to Expand Access to Local, Healthy Food

JACKSON, Miss. – Yesterday, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson officially launched his Make Mississippi Healthy Again (MMSHA) initiative and addressed local food opportunities and resources available for consumers and producers at a press conference held during the first Thursday Market at the Mississippi Farmers Market.

“For years now, it’s been so easy for families’ and individuals’ diets to include far too much ultra-processed foods, and our state’s overall health has suffered for it,” said Commissioner Gipson. “Mississippians battle all sorts of chronic illnesses today, and I believe that is directly connected to what we put in our bodies daily. The old saying “You are what you eat” is common sense, and it is true. If you eat primarily junk food, you’re going to have junky health, but if you eat fresh, healthy farm-raised foods, you’ll be healthier because of it. And that’s why I am so excited to officially launch “Make Mississippi Healthy Again.” This new statewide initiative will provide health and nutritional resources and information; will encourage consumers to eat less ultra-processed foods; will provide details on where to find fresh, locally sourced products; and will support our Mississippi farmers like never before.”

The main goal of the MMSHA initiative is to expand Mississippians’ access to healthy, local Mississippi foods. “Make Mississippi Healthy Again” will focus entirely on President Trump’s clear vision to work with our farmers to ensure that U.S. food is the healthiest, most abundant and most affordable in the world. Through this statewide campaign, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) spotlights farmers, ranchers, producers and business owners across the state who continue to provide safe, abundant, healthy and affordable food. And we will grow and expand the availability and distribution of Mississippi food products to every corner of the Magnolia State, both rural and urban areas.

Commissioner Gipson and MDAC are working with health officials, nutritionists and other organizations around the state to develop the MMSHA website and its resources. Visit www.makemshealthyagain.com for more information and the latest updates.

As part of MMSHA, Commissioner Gipson is visiting farms, restaurants and other agricultural operations to talk with owners about the nutritional benefits and importance of buying fresh, locally sourced

produce, dairy products and meats. So far, Gipson has visited Banks Farm in Brandon, Sandy Run Farm in Purvis, The Midtowner Restaurant in Hattiesburg, Clyde Magee's Farm in Mize, Nature's Gourmet Farm in Petal, Home Place Pastures in Como, Eubanks Produce in Lucedale and Nature Crest Farm in Mendenhall. Future scheduled visits along the MMSHA Farm Tour include Two Crackers Oyster Company in Vancleave, Sullivan's Produce in Meadville and Busby Farms Inc. in Pulaski, as well as events like the Watermelon Carnival in Water Valley and Watermelon Festival in Mize. Additional stops are being added frequently.

Commissioner Gipson also outlined several resources available through MDAC for consumers to find local products:

- ***Shop one of Mississippi's farmers markets that can found at msfarmersmarket.com.***
Farmers markets provide an opportunity for consumers to purchase fresh, local produce and other food products including meat, dairy and eggs. Currently, over 70 farmers markets can be found throughout Mississippi. The Mississippi Farmers Market in Jackson, which is operated by MDAC, is open on select Thursdays during the summer months from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. year-round. Find a complete listing of farmers markets statewide at www.msfarmersmarket.com.
- ***Visit a local u-pick agritourism farm that can be found at msagritourism.org.***
Many of the 108 agritourism operations in Mississippi include u-pick farms. These unique farms allow visitors to pick the fruits and vegetables they want. This is a great way to purchase produce that can be frozen and preserved for the future. To find an agritourism operation, visit www.msagritourism.org.
- ***Farmers can register to sell, and consumers can buy locally from farmers through the Mississippi Farm Marketplace.***
The Mississippi Farm Marketplace is an online portal developed by MDAC to connect farmers and consumers looking to purchase direct from growers. The Mississippi Farm Marketplace website allows farmers to list their available commodities for sale direct to the public, as well as labor needs on their farms through the job listings. The Mississippi Farm Marketplace is free to the public and easily accessible on any smart device. Find fresh produce or advertise agricultural commodities by visiting www.msfarmmarketplace.com.
- ***Subscribe to the in-print and online bimonthly Mississippi Market Bulletin.***
The *Mississippi Market Bulletin* is the state's #1 agricultural newspaper that provides the latest agriculture news and updates, while also directly connecting buyers and sellers from around the state. Currently, the *Mississippi Market Bulletin* has approximately 30,000 paying subscribers from across the United States and runs an average of 2,500 ad listings per issue for various agricultural commodities, equipment, property and services around the state. Subscribe to the *Mississippi Market Bulletin* today at www.msmarketbulletin.org.
- ***Shop the best of everything Grown, Raised, Crafted and Made through Genuine MS®.***
Genuine MS® is MDAC's state branding initiative to promote and bring attention to the incredible range of Mississippi products. Through this program, the public can find locally produced products from 325 members located around the state, including farms, ranches, agritourism operations and small businesses. The Genuine MS® Store, located inside the Mississippi Farmers Market, features a selection of over 840 Genuine MS® products. The store is open Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m.

until 1:00 p.m. For more information, visit www.genuinems.com and follow Genuine MS® on Facebook, Instagram and X.

- ***Learn about and link up with Mississippi farmers and u-pick operations growing specialty crops with Mississippi Freshly Picked.***

Mississippi is home to a diverse and thriving agricultural landscape, with specialty crops playing a vital role in the state's economy. On MDAC's Freshly Picked site, the public will discover the full spectrum of Mississippi's specialty crops — from field to table — and learn about the farmers, chefs and partnerships that help bring these crops to market. Find local specialty crop farmers and u-pick operations, educational podcasts, activities, recipes, videos and more at www.msfreshlypicked.com.

- ***Find nutritional information, health resources, farms and more at makemshealthyagain.com.***

The main goal of the Make Mississippi Healthy Again initiative is to expand Mississippian's access to healthy, local foods. Through this campaign, MDAC spotlights farmers, ranchers, producers and business owners across the state who continue to provide safe, abundant, healthy and affordable food for all. Stay updated on farms near you; hear their unique stories; find nutritional information and health resources; follow along with Commissioner Gipson's Farm Tour; and much more by visiting www.makemshealthyagain.com today.

"I strongly encourage the public to explore these resources and programs," continued Commissioner Gipson. "It is so important to educate yourself and understand where your food comes from – how it's grown, raised and processed. Then, you can make more informed decisions when purchasing food and incorporate more locally sourced products into your daily diet. By working together, we can build a healthier Mississippi – one farm, one family and one meal at a time."

Local Food Sources:

Farmers Markets – msfarmersmarket.com

Agritourism/U-pick Operations – msagritourism.org

Mississippi Farm Marketplace – msfarmmarketplace.com

Mississippi Market Bulletin – msmarketbulletin.org

Genuine MS® – genuinems.com

Mississippi Freshly Picked – msfreshlypicked.com

Make Mississippi Healthy Again – makemshealthyagain.com

To watch the press conference in its entirety visit, <https://youtu.be/NwAfzfeXTBU>. Visit www.mdac.ms.gov to learn more about the various opportunities and resources available to the public through the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

For updates and additional information about the Make Mississippi Healthy Again Campaign and Farm Tour, visit www.makemshealthyagain.com.

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Photo attached.



Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson officially launched his Make Mississippi Healthy Again initiative and addressed local food opportunities and resources available to the public at a press conference held during the first Thursday Market at the Mississippi Farmers Market. Pictured L-R: Mississippi Farmers Market Manager Jonathan McCraw; Mackenzy and Chance Amason of Amason Farms in Duck Hill, and their children; Commissioner Gipson and his wife, Leslie; Wendy Williams of Foot Print Farms in Jackson; Andrew Dennis of 5D Natural Farms in Raymond; Hernando Farmers Market Manager Tabitha Fulgham; Tim Cooper of Cooper Farms and Vineyard LLC in Morton; and Kim McCrory of McCrory Farms in Brandon.