



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

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Contact:**       **Hannah East, Communications Director**  
                          **(601) 359-1179 / cell: (662) 816-3230**  
                          [HannahE@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:HannahE@mdac.ms.gov)

## **Ag Commissioner Gipson Addresses Farm Crisis Following Initial F.A.R.M. Plan Meeting**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson discussed the current agriculture situation and plans for developing the Future of Agriculture Resiliency for Mississippi (F.A.R.M.) Strategic Plan following the initial meeting of the newly appointed F.A.R.M. Council. The F.A.R.M. Plan, recently established by Commissioner Gipson to strengthen Mississippi's agriculture industry, focuses on locally driven policies and action items that support producers, strengthen markets, protect resources and improve quality of life in rural Mississippi communities.

“Agriculture is currently in a time of crisis nationwide. When a crisis arises, we must respond. President Donald J. Trump and his Administration - including U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins - are working diligently to resolve the crisis, but, as we all know, it will not be resolved overnight,” said Commissioner Gipson. “Agriculture is Mississippi's largest industry, and we must make it a priority to plan for the future in order to make agriculture stronger and more resilient. I want to thank the members of the F.A.R.M. Council for coming together to discuss the critical issues our farmers and the agriculture industry are facing and begin developing policy recommendations that will be shared at the state and federal levels.”

Commissioner Gipson, who serves as Chair of the F.A.R.M. Council, was joined by Council members Casey Anderson, Executive Director of the Mississippi Forestry Association; Kevin Brown, Regional Manager and Policy Development Coordinator of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation; Ben Burkett, State Coordinator of the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives; Darnella Winston, Project Director of the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives; Dr. Keith Coble, Vice-President of the Mississippi State University Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine; Dr. Ryn Laster, Director of Food Safety and Animal Welfare at Cal-Maine Foods, Inc.; Mark Leggett, President of the Mississippi Poultry Association; Bubba Simmons, Producer and former President of the Mississippi Delta Council; and Hunter Taylor, Vice President and Branch Manager of the Mississippi Land Bank.

During the meeting, Mississippi Commissioner of Insurance Mike Chaney and David Browning, Deputy Commissioner of the Mississippi Insurance Department, presented on insurance as relates to the poultry industry. Poultry houses in Mississippi are concentrated in areas prone to have severe weather including tornadic activity and wind events, which creates more risks for insurance companies leading to increasing insurance premiums and challenges obtaining insurance.

Dr. Keith Coble provided an overview of Mississippi's agriculture industry as a whole, along with key insights into individual commodities, before members of the Council shared the specific challenges impacting their respective sectors. While the cattle industry is the bright spot for agriculture, row crop prices remain low coupled with high input costs leaving farmers with negative returns. Dr. Coble pointed out that the slowing world population in key markets is impacting agricultural demand.

The Council discussed additional issues and needs that will be addressed in the F.A.R.M. Strategic Plan including trade and the share of ag commodity markets lost to other countries like Brazil, labor and workforce development, land ownership and succession planning, potential threats of animal diseases, market development for agricultural commodities, infrastructure development, and a safety net for farmers.

"These are high level issues that are negatively affecting our farmers and producers, which in turn, will negatively impact our families and individual consumers as well," continued Commissioner Gipson. "So, we're looking at what can we do in Mississippi today to make sure agriculture remains strong in the future of our great state."

"I believe this is the most significant initiative our agency has launched since I took office as Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce because we are not just thinking about today or tomorrow only. We are thinking about 10 to 20 years down the road – what is agriculture going to look like for Mississippi? And that is the question we are going to help answer."

Before adjourning, the F.A.R.M. Council finalized plans for five stakeholder roundtable meetings to be held across key regions of the state. These discussions will bring together farmers, producers, industry professionals, policymakers, insurance representatives and others to provide input and recommend forward-thinking, locally driven policies that support producers, strengthen markets, protect resources and improve the quality of life in rural communities.

The following meetings have been officially scheduled:

- December 11, 2025 – Stoneville, MS
- January 21, 2026 – Hattiesburg, MS
- February 4, 2026 – Verona, MS
- February 26, 2026 – Brookhaven, MS
- March 6, 2026 – Jackson, MS

Following these roundtable discussions, the Council will put together a plan of action for policy recommendations to aid and strengthen Mississippi's agriculture industry. The finalized Strategic Plan is expected to be presented to the Mississippi Legislature and Congressional delegation by the fourth quarter of 2026, with interim recommendations prior to that time.

To view the press conference discussing the F.A.R.M. Strategic Plan and first Council meeting, visit <https://youtu.be/6D5pd87vEgo>. For more information about the F.A.R.M. Council and Strategic Plan, visit [www.mdac.ms.gov](http://www.mdac.ms.gov).

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**Photo attached.**



**Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson discussed the current agriculture situation and plans for developing the Future of Agriculture Resiliency for Mississippi (F.A.R.M.) Strategic Plan following the initial meeting of the newly appointed F.A.R.M. Council. Pictured L-R: Dr. Ryn Laster, Director of Food Safety and Animal Welfare at Cal-Maine Foods, Inc.; Kevin Brown, Regional Manager and Policy Development Coordinator of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation; Hunter Taylor, Vice President and Branch Manager of the Mississippi Land Bank; Bubba Simmons, Producer and former President of the Mississippi Delta Council; Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson; Dr. Keith Coble, Vice-President of the Mississippi State University Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine; Casey Anderson, Executive Director of the Mississippi Forestry Association; Mark Leggett, President of the Mississippi Poultry Association; Darnella Winston, Project Director of the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives; and Ben Burkett, State Coordinator of the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives.**