



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson and MDAC Celebrate National Ag Day in the Capital City** *Cow Milking Competitions Held to Commemorate Ag Day*

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce celebrated National Ag Day with a focus on dairy including cow milking competitions and Genuine Mississippi milk and ice cream from the Beason Family Farm of Neshoba County. Governor Tate Reeves proclaimed today “Agriculture Day” in the State of Mississippi.

Commissioner Gipson was joined outside Galloway United Methodist Church, across from the Mississippi Capitol, by Mississippi farmers, legislators and local media representatives. State Representative Shanda Yates, State Representative Kent McCarty, State Senator Kamesha Mumford, State Senator Jeremy England, WLBT’s Studio 3 Co-host Jessica Wilkinson, WJTV Meteorologist Austin Powell, and WAPT Reporter Brooklyn Joyner all participated in the milking contests.

“Agriculture’s role in Mississippi has never been more important. It is the number one industry in the state, the backbone of our economy and the basis of our small towns and rural communities,” said Commissioner Gipson. “We are proud to take this time to recognize our farmers, ranchers and producers on this special day – National Agriculture Day. I encourage everyone to seek out and thank your local farmers today.”

Gipson went on to highlight the U.S. Dietary Guidelines released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce’s (MDAC) Make Mississippi Healthy Again initiative and MDAC’s Genuine MS® Program. He thanked Mississippi legislators for passing House Bill 1153 which prohibits the sale, offer for sale and the manufacture of “cell-cultured dairy products” that are derived from animal cells cultured outside of a live animal.

“We are living in a time where it seems everything is artificial, and you wonder what is real. We’ve seen everything from fake grass, astroturf, to fake meat, and now they’ve come up with lab grown, or fake, milk,” Commissioner Gipson continued. “So today, we’re especially proud to be here to celebrate agriculture, and to promote real food for real people. Thank you to our legislators for making Mississippi the first state in America to outlaw fake milk.”

Following brief remarks from Mississippi House Agriculture Committee Chairman Bill Pigott and Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Neil Whaley, Commissioner Gipson invited the designated contestants

to face off in back-to-back milking competitions with Jersey dairy cows provided by Beason Family Farm of Philadelphia. The Commissioner awarded first place trophies and bragging rights to the winners: Senator Jeremy England and Meteorologist Austin Powell, who collected the most milk within the time of two minutes. The cow milking contestants were encouraged by young people from the Galloway Children's Center who chanted "milk that cow; milk that cow."

Commissioner Gipson said, "Most of those children had not seen a cow in real life. None of them had seen a cow milked. Now they know where their milk and ice cream come from and they'll remember this experience for years to come."

Visitors and spectators were treated to fresh bottled milk and ice cream produced by the very cows on site and provided by Genuine MS® member Beason Family Farm.

View full Ag Day festivities at <https://youtu.be/QL48OL5yWjo> and the Ag Day proclamation signed by Governor Tate Reeves at <https://agnet.mdac.ms.gov/agManage/uploads/3351.pdf>.

"You are what you eat, and we are forever grateful to our farmers who grow and raise the food we consume every day," said Gipson. "Another exciting initiative we are proud to take part in is the USDA's national awareness campaign to highlight the 'Product of USA' label. This standard ensures that when consumers see the label on meat, poultry or processed egg products, it means the animal was born, raised, harvested and processed entirely within the United States. This labeling initiative to identify fresh, locally sourced food products raised right here in the U.S. not only supports our farmers, but also allows consumers to make informed, healthier decisions."

Agriculture is the largest industry in the state of Mississippi, producing \$9.5 billion in agricultural commodities last year alone. Agriculture also employs 11.4 percent of the state's workforce and contributes to over 14 percent of the state's overall economic activity. Mississippi currently ranks in the Top 20 in the U.S. for production of 11 agricultural commodities, including catfish, sweet potatoes, cotton, pine lumber, broilers, rice, peanuts and more.

National Ag Day was established in 1973 by the Agriculture Council of America as an effort to encourage every American to understand how food and fiber products are produced; appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products; value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy; and acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food and fiber industry. To learn more about National Agriculture Day, visit [www.agday.org](http://www.agday.org).

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**Photos attached.**



**Within the legislative cow milking contest, Senators Kamesha Mumford and Jeremy England collected the most milk within their timed competitions. Overall, Senator England won first place with a total amount of nine ounces milked. Pictured L-R: State Senator Jeremy England; Commissioner Gipson; and State Senator Kamesha Mumford.**



**WJTV's representative, Austin Powell, won first place in the media cow milking contest. Pictured L-R: Commissioner Gipson; WAPT Reporter Brooklyn Joyner; WJTV Meteorologist Austin Powell; and WLBT's Studio 3 Co-host Jessica Wilkinson.**