



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

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Commissioner Andy Gipson Announces 2026-2027 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council *Cooper Freeman of Smith County Among the 10 Student Finalists Chosen to Serve***

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the members of the 2026-2027 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council. High school senior Cooper Freeman of Smith County was among the 10 student finalists chosen to serve on the 2026-2027 Ag Youth Council. Cooper, son of Jared and Shelly Freeman, attends Mize High School in Mize.

“We are proud to welcome these outstanding young leaders to the Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council,” said Commissioner Gipson. “Each of these students has demonstrated a strong interest in agriculture and a commitment to leadership. This program gives them a firsthand look at the many opportunities within Mississippi’s agriculture industry while helping them develop the skills needed to become future advocates and leaders.”

The other high school seniors selected include Makayla Howard of Greene County; Travis Lord of Hinds County; Tate McClellan of Holmes County; Annalyn Cates of Lamar County; Joy Kitchens of Lauderdale County; McKinley Johnson of Neshoba County; Joselyn Brewer of Rankin County; Abby Gipson of Simpson County; and Addi Carney of Wayne 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).

The 2026-2027 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council is comprised of 10 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 2026 to June 2027 and attend a minimum of four meetings at the MDAC headquarters located in Jackson.

Visit [www.mdac.ms.gov/mayc](http://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](mailto:peyton@mdac.ms.gov).

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**Photo attached.**



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