



**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 *Joy Kitchens of Lauderdale 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 Joy Kitchens of Lauderdale County was among the 10 student finalists chosen to serve on the 2026-2027 Ag Youth Council. Joy, daughter of Ron and Amy Kitchens, is homeschooled in Collinsville.

“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; McKinley Johnson of Neshoba County; Joselyn Brewer of Rankin County; Abby Gipson of Simpson County; Cooper Freeman of Smith 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 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.



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