



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS STATEMENT

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Ag Commissioner Gipson Supports Efforts to Prevent Importation of Foreign Fish Virus *Gipson Urges Consumers to Only Eat U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish*

JACKSON, Miss. – Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson gave the following statement as officials in Washington, D.C., urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to address the threat posed by foreign catfish viruses.

“I support Senators Wicker and Hyde-Smith in their efforts to put restrictions on imported foreign fish to prevent contamination of our own aquaculture operations. These highly contagious viruses identified in foreign fish can survive freezing and thawing, creating a risk of contamination.

Last month, I was honored to meet with USDA Under Secretary Dudley Hoskins in Pontotoc, Mississippi, where this very topic was discussed. I greatly appreciate what Secretary Rollins, he and USDA are doing to keep these foreign viruses from reaching and contaminating fish operations here in America.

As always, I encourage people to make sure you’re eating Mississippi and U.S. farm-raised fish. Not only is it a fresher and healthier option, it’s also safe to eat and supports our local farmers. Be sure to look for that domestic label when shopping at grocery stores or ordering at restaurants.

Mississippi leads the nation in catfish production, a \$196 million industry, with over 28,000 acres in production statewide. No one knows catfish like we do here in the South, and I urge consumers to choose safe, high-quality U.S. farm-raised catfish.”

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