



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Mississippi Land Bank Offers First 25 New Agritourism Operations Genuine MS® Memberships as a Way to Celebrate Agritourism Month in October

JACKSON, Miss. – Mississippi Land Bank, a member of the Farm Credit System and a financing partner for agriculture and rural communities across 32 counties in northern Mississippi, has announced it will cover the cost of a one-year membership for the first 25 agritourism operations that join the Genuine MS® program, helping more Mississippi agritourism operations promote their business. The initiative is a celebration of October as Agritourism Month.

Agriculture is Mississippi's largest industry, and agritourism is one of the state's fastest-growing tourism markets. Mississippi is home to 107 agritourism operations.

"Mississippi is home to a diverse and growing agritourism industry that showcases the best of our state's agricultural heritage and hospitality," said Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson. "This partnership with Mississippi Land Bank provides more opportunities for agritourism businesses to promote their operations through the Genuine MS® brand. We appreciate Mississippi Land Bank's investment in our farmers, producers and small businesses and its commitment to creating new opportunities for growth through Mississippi's state branding program."

Through this partnership, new agritourism members who enroll in the Genuine MS® program through October 31, 2026, will have their first year of membership paid for by Mississippi Land Bank. The initiative is designed to remove financial barriers and encourage more Mississippi-based businesses to participate in the statewide branding and marketing program.

"At Mississippi Land Bank, our core values are Rooted in Relationships, Grounded in Giving and Advocates for Agriculture," Chad Crow, CEO of Mississippi Land Bank. "Our partnership with Genuine MS® is a natural extension of those values. We're excited to support this membership promotion and help more Mississippi family farms become part of Genuine MS®. Building strong relationships within

agriculture is at the heart of who we are, and we're proud to invest in the farmers, families and communities that make Mississippi agriculture strong."

Genuine MS® is a state branding program under the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) that promotes products grown, raised, crafted and made in Mississippi. Members benefit from statewide marketing efforts, promotional opportunities and the ability to use the Genuine MS® logo to showcase their products.

"This partnership with Mississippi Land Bank expands access to the Genuine MS® program while creating new opportunities to support and promote Mississippi's agritourism businesses," said Lane Milton, Genuine MS® Director. "We are proud to showcase the creativity, talent and innovation of businesses across our state, and we look forward to welcoming new members to the Genuine MS® family."

The support from Mississippi Land Bank will cover one year of Genuine MS® membership fees for the first 25 new agritourism applicants who apply and are approved by October 31, 2026. Agritourism operations can apply through the Genuine MS® website. Membership availability is subject to program guidelines and approval. For more information and how to apply for membership, visit <https://genuinems.com/>.

With fall marking the peak season for many agritourism operations, October provides an opportunity for Mississippians and visitors to explore the state's farms and experience agriculture firsthand.

"Agritourism farms across Mississippi offer visitors an opportunity to experience the heart and soul of our state," said Katie Sansing, MDAC Agritourism Director. "Whether you are looking for a family-friendly destination with activities for all ages or a smaller farm offering an intimate, hands-on experience, there is something for everyone. From the beauty of our rural communities to the genuine hospitality of the people who call them home, Mississippi's agritourism farms provide visitors with memorable experiences and a unique connection to the people, places and agricultural traditions that make our state special."

MDAC administers the Mississippi Agritourism Limited Liability Program. Registered agritourism operations offer a wide variety of experiences, including pumpkin patches, hayrides, corn mazes, children's activities, petting zoos, Christmas tree farms, U-picks and more. The MDAC Agritourism Program allows visitors to search registered operations and filter farms by specific activities and experiences. To find registered agritourism operations and plan an agritourism adventure, visit www.msagritourism.org.

For more information about the Mississippi Agritourism Program, visit www.msagritourism.org or contact Katie Sansing at katie@mdac.ms.gov.

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