



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
(601) 359-1163 / cell: (662) 312-5897
Paige@mdac.ms.gov

Hannah East, Marketing Specialist
(601) 359-1179
HannahE@mdac.ms.gov

Ag Theft Investigation of Stolen Airplane Engine Leads to Recovery of Large Cache of Stolen Equipment in Sunflower County

JACKSON, Miss. – On Friday, November 4, an engine was stolen off an airplane that was stored in a crop-duster hanger in Valley Park in Issaquena County. The theft of the plane engine was reported to the Issaquena Sheriff’s Office. The Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau (MALTB) was asked to assist in the theft investigation.

During the investigation, information surfaced that led investigators to Sunflower County. Agents with MALTB, Issaquena County Sheriff’s Office, Sunflower County Sheriff’s Office and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) executed a search warrant on several locations in Sunflower County on Thursday, November 10.

As a result of the search, numerous stolen items were recovered including the stolen plane engine, a John Deere tractor, trailers, four-wheelers, ATV’s, lawn mowers, welding machine, ditch witch trencher, fuel tanks and a commercial grade bush hog, along with other additional items. One arrest was made during the search warrant execution. This is an ongoing investigation, with additional arrests expected.

“I commend Director Dean Barnard, Ag Theft investigators, Issaquena and Sunflower County Sheriff’s Offices and the FAA for their efforts in this ongoing investigation. This is an example of multiple law enforcement agencies working together to quickly and successfully resolve a case,” said Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson.

Mississippi Agricultural Theft Bureau Director, Dean Barnard, praised MALTB investigators, Issaquena and Sunflower Sheriff’s Offices and the FAA for their diligent work in this ongoing investigation.

The Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau, a division of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, enforces state laws pertaining to the theft of cattle, horses, swine, poultry, fish, farm equipment, chemicals, timber and all other farm or agriculture-related crimes. Visit www.mdac.ms.gov/bureaus-departments/agricultural-livestock-theft-bureau/ to learn more about the MALTB. To report or provide information regarding an agricultural crime, call (800) 678-2660.

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Photos and cutline attached.

Cutline: Agents with the Mississippi Agriculture and Livestock Theft Bureau (MALTB) and the Issaquena County Sherriff's Office, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and Sunflower County Sherriff's Office executed a search warrant on several locations in Sunflower County recovering numerous items including a stolen plane engine, John Deere tractor, trailers, four-wheelers, ATV's, lawn mowers, welding machine, ditch witch trencher, fuel tanks and a commercial grade bush hog.



