



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson Announces Mississippi Local Food Initiative Between Mississippi Farmers and Food Banks

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced a new local food initiative between Mississippi farmers and food banks at the Mississippi Food Network in Jackson. Commissioner Gipson was joined by Dr. Charles Beady, Jr., CEO of the Mississippi Food Network; Michael Ledger, CEO and President of Feeding the Gulf Coast; and Cathy Pope, CEO and President of Mid-South Food Bank.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) was awarded \$2.82 million through a Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement with United States Department of Agriculture. Through this initiative, food will be procured from local farmers and food producers, including socially disadvantaged farmers and processors, and distributed to underserved communities throughout the state. MDAC is partnering with the Mississippi Food Network, Feeding the Gulf Coast and Mid-South Food Bank, three Feeding America affiliated food banks, to procure and distribute the local food through their networks of existing and new agency partners.

MDAC is developing a directory of local farmers and food processors for the food banks to utilize to find local Mississippi food products. Commissioner Gipson encourages farmers and other food producers and processors that are interested in potentially marketing their products through this program to visit www.mdac.ms.gov/msfp/ to register their farm or business in the directory. Types of eligible food items include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meat products, rice, eggs, value-added processed foods and beverages.

“MDAC is proud to partner with the three Feeding America affiliated food banks in our great state – Mississippi Food Network, Feeding the Gulf Coast and Mid-South Food Bank,” said Commissioner Gipson. “This unique partnership allows us to support our local Mississippi farmers and food producers, while benefitting people in need throughout underserved communities in Mississippi. This initiative is just the beginning of a long-term partnership that will last well beyond this initial round of funding as it

will continue to grow and expand marketing opportunities for producers statewide. I encourage our Mississippi farmers and food producers interested in potentially marketing products through this program to go online and register to be included in the local food source directory.”

Visit www.mdac.ms.gov/msfp/ to learn more about this initiative and to register for the directory. Visit <https://youtu.be/ypEx15Ezanc> to view the entire press conference.

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Photo attached.



Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced a local foods initiative between Mississippi farmers and food banks during a press conference held at the Mississippi Food Network in Jackson. Pictured (L-R): Andy Gipson, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce; Michael Ledger, CEO and President of Feeding the Gulf Coast; Cathy Pope, CEO and President of Mid-South Food Bank; and Dr. Charles Beady, Jr., CEO of the Mississippi Food Network.