



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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USDA Accepting Applications for Mississippi Hemp Production Licenses

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Act (Senate Bill 2725) was signed into law on June 29, 2020. This act legalized the cultivation of hemp under a state plan to be created and implemented by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce. Although the act allowed for a state hemp cultivation program, the necessary funding to implement the state program was not appropriated by the Mississippi Legislature.

“I appreciate the Mississippi Legislature providing farmers with access to a new agricultural commodity. However, the economic stress of COVID-19 made it difficult for the Legislature to find a way to fund the program. As a result, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce cannot implement a state hemp program. Should the Legislature decide to fund a hemp program, MDAC will request to be the licensing agency,” said Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson.

Gipson continued, “However, I have been in constant communication with the USDA as we prepared to implement a hemp program for Mississippi. In late June, I notified the USDA that the Mississippi Hemp Cultivation Act had passed, but without funding for the program. I requested the USDA accept applications and issue hemp grower licenses for Mississippians under the USDA plan. The USDA has agreed to this plan, and Mississippians can from August 1 through October 31 submit applications for a hemp license from the USDA under the U.S. Domestic Hemp Production Program.”

Guidance for producers wanting to obtain a USDA hemp production license can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/hemp/information-producers. Applicants must provide a copy of a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal history report. An applicant will not receive a USDA hemp production license if the applicant has been convicted of a felony related to a controlled substance in the last 10 years.

Due to remote work conditions in Washington, D.C., the USDA strongly encourages all applications be sent electronically to farmbill.hemp@usda.gov for expedited processing. Alternatively, completed applications can be mailed with a copy of the FBI criminal history report to USDA/AMS/Specialty Crops Program, Hemp Branch, 470 L’Enfant Plaza S.W., Post Office Box 23192, Washington D.C. 20026.

All requirements and information related to the USDA Domestic Hemp Production Program may be viewed at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/hemp>. If you have questions, please email farmbill.hemp@usda.gov or call 202-720-2491.

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