



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Gipson Announces MDAC's New Wild Hog Control Program

Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced a new Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) program, the Wild Hog Control Program (WHCP). Commissioner Gipson was joined by Mississippi House of Representatives Agriculture Chairman Bill Pigott, Mississippi State Senate Agriculture Chairman Charles Younger, and Mike McCormick, President of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation.

“We are excited to launch the first-of-its-kind state agriculture department-led invasive feral hog trapping initiative,” said Commissioner Gipson. “After a full year of public education, research and outreach through the Commissioner’s Wild Hog Challenge, MDAC is launching the Wild Hog Control Program, which will provide farmers, ranchers and landowners with the resources and training necessary to effectively combat the rise of destructive wild hogs in Mississippi.”

During the 2020 Legislative Session, MDAC was authorized to operate programs to fight nuisance wildlife species on private agricultural and forestry lands. The WHCP will involve the coordinated trapping and control of feral hogs on private farm and timber land throughout Mississippi. Working at the request of local farmers, this program will include training and technical assistance for farmers on the most effective methods to trap and control destructive wild hogs on their farm. Following training, one or more WHCP “smart” trapping systems may be set up on the farm, and farmers, or their designees, will be trained on the remote monitoring methods and best practices for effective trapping.

“In Mississippi alone, wild hogs cause more than \$60 million in damages annually. As I’ve said many times, we already know the problem and now we are taking meaningful action to curb the invasion of hogs on farmlands. The WHCP will fight the scourge of wild hogs on behalf of Mississippi farmers and ranchers. I want to thank Mike McCormick and the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation for their indispensable support, and I want to thank Representative Pigott, Senator Younger and the entire Mississippi legislature for their support in this endeavor,” said Commissioner Gipson.

MDAC acquired the first set of “smart” traps in August 2020, and currently these traps are being used in a 30-day test period in southwest Mississippi. The traps are powered by Mississippi-based HogEye Camera Systems which allow for remote trapping capability wherever there is cellular signal. Once the test phase is completed, MDAC will open an application period in late September for farmers to submit trap-use applications. Submitted applications will be ranked based on number of acres available for trapping and

historical agricultural losses caused by wild hogs on the property. Rotation of traps will occur approximately every 30-60 days, depending on use and success. MDAC will collect and analyze data including trap locations, program effectiveness and number of wild hogs harvested.

The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation provided key support to the program with the acquisition of additional traps that will be deployed across the state. “Feral hogs continue to cause tremendous damage to ag land across all regions of Mississippi. We are proud to support MDAC’s effort to offer assistance to private landowners. I believe intensive trapping is necessary to truly suppress feral hog populations,” Mike McCormick, President of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation.

MDAC will continue to work with state and federal partners such as the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks; USDA APHIS Wildlife Services; and Mississippi State University. These partners are vital in determining where nuisance wildlife management is needed the most across the state, with agricultural damage having the highest priority.

Visit www.mdac.ms.gov/whcp for more information. If interested in participating in the Wild Hog Control Program, contact Chris McDonald at chris@mdac.ms.gov.

Also during the press conference, Commissioner Gipson addressed the impacts of Hurricane Laura on Mississippi residents. He announced the Mississippi State Fairgrounds will be used as a temporary shelter for evacuated horses and livestock affected by the storm. For more information on utilizing the shelter space, call the Mississippi State Fairgrounds at 601-961-4000 for more details.

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Photos attached.



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Pictured left to right: Younger, McCormick, Commissioner Gipson and Pigott.**