



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson Announces Organic Certification Cost-Share Program

JACKSON, Miss. – Commissioner Andy Gipson announced that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) is currently offering a cost-share program for Mississippi organic producers and handlers receiving certification or continuation of certification by a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) accredited certifying agent.

“This is a great opportunity for farmers that have received the USDA Organic Certification in the past year to help offset some of the costs associated with this certification,” said Commissioner Gipson, “I am glad that we are able to offer this program again for 2020, and I encourage our farmers to take advantage of this opportunity during these unprecedented times.”

Funding is available for those that received the certification between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020. Individual organic operators are eligible for reimbursement of 50 percent of their fiscal year 2020 certification costs up to a maximum of \$500 per category of certification. The National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program currently recognizes the following categories of certification eligible for reimbursement: crops, wild crops, livestock and handler.

To be eligible for reimbursement, the following must be provided to MDAC by applicants: proof of certification issued by a USDA accredited certifying agent, a reimbursement form, an itemized invoice for certification-related expenses, an IRS W-9 form and documentation of the payment in the form of a cancelled check. Applicants must be Mississippi organic producers and handlers located within the State of Mississippi. Funds are available on a first-come, first-serve basis until the funds are depleted. Operations may receive one reimbursement per year. The deadline to submit applications is December 15, 2020.

For more information about this program or to obtain an application, visit www.mdac.ms.gov/market-development/national-organic-cost-share-program or contact Susan Lawrence at susan@mdac.ms.gov or (601) 213-7542.

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