



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

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Ag Commissioner Gipson Kicks-off Sale of Junior Champions**

**JACKSON, Miss.** - Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson kicked off the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sale of Junior Champions today by recognizing the collaborative efforts of the Mississippi State University Extension Service, FFA, and the Sale of Champions Promotions Committee in making the Sale of Junior Champions a success year after year. The Sale of Junior Champions is one of the highlight events of the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo. During the livestock auction, 4-H and FFA youth livestock exhibitors winning Champion and Reserve Champion in the Junior Round-Up sell their animals, and scholarships are also awarded.

Commissioner Gipson was joined by Dr. Gary Jackson, Mississippi State University Extension Service Director; Ted Kendall IV, Chairman of the Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee; Jill Wagner, Program Supervisor of Mississippi Agricultural Education & FFA program with the Mississippi Department of Education; Dr. Dean Jousan, 4-H Livestock Specialist with Mississippi State University; and Kaleb Henry, State FFA Vice President.

“The State of Mississippi is fortunate to have such strong 4-H and FFA programs that provide our youth with a strong foundation, all thanks to the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Department of Education. Through these programs, our youth are learning such valuable lessons that will last a lifetime. Today’s Sale of Champions is just one example of the many opportunities that these youth, our future leaders in agriculture, are being given,” said Commissioner Gipson. “I am so proud of all of the livestock exhibitors and scholarship recipients that are being recognized today.”

This year 1,593 4-H and FFA members from across Mississippi participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Show showing 2,292 head of various livestock including pigs, sheep, cattle, and goats. Forty-five animals will be sold for top dollar in the Sale of Champions. In addition, scholarships totaling \$60,000 will be awarded to 38 students.

“Our young people have invested a lot of time and effort in these champion animals, and it’s exciting to be part of a long tradition of rewarding their work through the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions and scholarship program,” said MSU Extension Director Gary Jackson. “We appreciate the business leaders who

support the sale, the parents and families who make these livestock projects possible, and the volunteers, FFA advisors, and Extension agents and staff who share their expertise.”

Since the Sale of Champions began in 1970, the event has continued to grow due to the generosity and dedication of the Sale of Champions Committee members. Over the past 51 years, the sale has grossed over \$7.6 million. Last year, the sale of 46 winning animals grossed \$404,395, and thirty-seven scholarships were presented to 4-H and FFA members totaling \$58,500. Since the first scholarships were given in 1993, over 720 scholarships have been awarded to various 4-H and FFA members totaling \$949,700.

“The Sale of Junior Champions is more than just a livestock auction. It is an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our young people that are involved in 4-H and FFA. The Sale of Champions Promotion Committee is proud to continue our over fifty year commitment of providing financial rewards and collegiate scholarships to these hardworking youth that have spent many months raising and caring for their animals,” said Ted Kendall, IV, Chairman of the Dixie National Sale of Champions Committee.

The Sale of Junior Champions provides an opportunity for students to earn money for college, as well as helps them to develop a wide host of skills. The youth participating in the livestock show spend months raising and caring for their livestock learning the value of hard work and responsibility.

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**Picture and outline attached.**



**Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson (center) kicked off the Sale of Junior Champions today at the Trade Mart. He was joined by (left to right) Ted Kendall IV, Chairman of the Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee; Kaleb Henry, State FFA Vice President from Wayne County; Jill Wagner, Program Supervisor of Mississippi Agricultural Education & FFA program with the Mississippi Department of Education; Dr. Gary Jackson, Mississippi State University Extension Service Director; and Dr. Dean Jousan, 4-H Livestock Specialist with Mississippi State University.**