



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

## PRESS RELEASE

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**Commissioner Andy Gipson Announces Mississippi Ag Youth Council Members**  
*Attala, Forrest, Hinds, Jackson, Lauderdale, Newton, Oktibbeha, Smith and Tippah Counties*  
*Represented*

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the members of the new Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council. High school seniors, Samuel Matthews and Elizabeth Skelton of Oktibbeha County, were two of the 12 student finalists chosen to serve on the 2021 Ag Youth Council. Samuel, son of Todd and Allison Matthews, attends Starkville Christian School and Elizabeth, daughter of David and Theresa Skelton, attends Starkville Academy in Starkville.

The other high school seniors selected include Samuel Devin Granger of Attala County; Hannah Buse of Forrest County; Lila Murphy of Hinds County; Adaline Rouse of Jackson County; Max Hodgins of Lauderdale County; Regan Hand and Drew Wagner of Newton County; Faith Sullivan and Delton Boone of Smith County; and Billie Chapman of Tippah County. Members were chosen by a board made up of representatives of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC).

“I’m proud to announce the very first members of our department’s Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council,” said Commissioner Gipson. “I appreciate each and every student who applied, and applaud the 12 finalists selected for this distinguished honor. This council is an initiative close to my heart that will provide students interested in the agriculture industry a hands-on experience that cultivates leadership, work ethic and life skills while developing Mississippi’s future workforce. With agriculture being the state’s leading industry, it is important that we teach our youth about the different opportunities to be found within agriculture.”

The 2021 Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council is comprised of 12 high school seniors with an interest in agriculture. The goal of this council is to provide industry exposure and experiential learning in a variety of agriculture fields to youth leaders who have been selected from around the state. Council members will visit Mississippi agricultural companies and organizations, learn about the legislative process and how it affects the agriculture industry, shadow industry professionals and hone professional skills. Council members will serve for one year, from August 2021 to June 2022, and attend a minimum of four meetings at the MDAC headquarters located in Jackson.

For more information about the Mississippi Agriculture Youth Council, visit [www.mdac.ms.gov](http://www.mdac.ms.gov) or contact Gayle Fortenberry at [gayle@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:gayle@mdac.ms.gov) or Emily Stovall at [emilys@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:emilys@mdac.ms.gov).

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