



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Andy Gipson Hosts Agriculture Technology Roundtable

JACKSON, Miss. – On May 18, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson hosted an Agriculture Technology Roundtable discussion with farmers, university officials, legislators and industry stakeholders at Mississippi State University’s (MSU) Delta Research and Extension Center (DREC) in Stoneville.

“The future of agriculture, Mississippi’s top industry, is driven heavily by the introduction and adoptions of new technologies,” said Commissioner Gipson. “This roundtable provided us the opportunity to bring together various stakeholders to discuss the vital role technology plays in agriculture and its importance to the industry and farmers’ bottom lines.”

Dr. Steve Martin, associate director of the MSU Extension Service and interim head of the Delta Research and Extension Center, opened with a brief overview of DREC. Panelists included Pete Nelson, executive director of AgLaunch in Memphis, Tenn., who discussed the AgLaunch’s efforts to grow ag tech startups and build collaborative farmer networks across the surrounding region. Dee Boykin of the Southern Soil & Plant Lab, LLC, in Yazoo City, discussed various agriculture technology practices used by farmers including aerial imagery, drones and variable rate applications, as well as the challenges faced by farmers with inadequate broadband access.

Dr. Alex Thomasson, department head of MSU’s Department of Agriculture and Biological Engineering, discussed the importance of various technologies including precision ag, drones and robots, plant phenomics, and traceability and block chain. Dr. Edmund Buckner, dean and director of Land Grant Programs at Alcorn State University, gave an overview of the research that the university is conducting, specifically in the area of specialty crops to increase yields and the global food supply. Division Director and Bureau Manager Joe Donavon with the Mississippi Development Authority’s (MDA) Entrepreneur Center presented MDA’s V-Quad program, an initiative that links together research universities, non-profit organizations and government entities in Mississippi to develop systems to develop technologies quickly.

“We heard real world examples of how farmers implemented technology to increase both yields and efficiencies. That means more food is produced while increasing profits for farmers. I appreciate those who were part of the important discussions during this busy time for our farmers. This roundtable was just the beginning of many discussions to come regarding the importance of technology in agriculture and its future role within the industry,” said Commissioner Gipson.

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Photo attached.



Commissioner Andy Gipson hosted an Agriculture Technology Roundtable discussion with farmers, university officials, legislators and industry stakeholders at Mississippi State University's Delta Research and Extension Center in Stoneville to discuss the vital role that technology plays in agriculture.