



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

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 26, 2021**

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## **Mississippi Land, Water and Timber Resources Board Announces Approval of \$3.1 Million to Expand Meat Processing Capacity in the State; Doubles Mississippi Meat Processing Capacity**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – The Mississippi Land, Water and Timber Resources Board (LWTRB) approved \$3.1 million in financial assistance to seven livestock processing facilities to increase their capacity following interruptions in the food supply chain due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board, co-chaired by Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson and Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority John Rounsaville, approved funding to expand currently operating USDA-inspected processing facilities and construct new USDA-inspected facilities.

“Last May, when the pandemic was still new, I announced steps toward making Mississippi's food supply chain more resilient. We removed limits on the number of owners allowed per animal for custom slaughter. We created MSFarmMarketplace.com to connect directly farmers and consumers to enhance farm-to-table supply lines. We provided guidance to farmers markets across the state so if they chose to remain open, they could operate safely. And, we invited meat processors in the state to submit applications to expand their operations. A year later, we have approved \$3.1 million to effectively double Mississippi's domestic meat processing capacity,” Commissioner Gipson said.

The Mississippi LWTRB approved applications from seven processors.

- Attala Frozen Foods in Attala County, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$611,110 to expand its USDA-inspected processing facility. The grant allows for the building construction and the purchase of equipment.
- Homestead Farm and Packing in George County, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$49,700 to purchase new equipment to increase the processing capacity of its USDA-inspected processing facility.
- Pitcock Processing, Inc. in Panola County, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$494,745.80 and a loan in the amount of \$329,897.20 to construct a new USDA-inspected processing facility and purchase equipment.

- Cutting Edge Meat Co. in Greene County, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$350,000 to assist with the cost of constructing a new USDA-inspected processing facility and purchasing equipment.
- A Cut Above Meat Processing and Market, LLC in Hancock County, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$529,560 and a loan in the amount of \$353,040 to construct a new USDA-inspected processing facility and purchase new equipment.
- Blue Sky RE, LLC in Rankin County, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$304,385 to purchase a USDA-inspected mobile processing unit and modular cut and wrap facility. This innovative mobile facility providing USDA-inspected slaughter on-site at Mississippi farms is the first of its kind in the state.
- Juniper Creek Farms, LLC in Pearl River County, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$70,000 to construct an on-farm USDA-inspected poultry processing facility.

“The past year has been difficult for many industries in Mississippi, and agriculture is no exception,” said MDA Executive Director John Rounsaville. “The intent of these loans and grants is to enhance market opportunities for livestock producers and processors while simultaneously strengthening our agricultural economy.”

The number of USDA-inspected facilities that provide slaughtering and processing services to the public will double. A new mobile processing unit, the first of its kind in Mississippi, will bring the slaughtering component direct to the farm. The increased number of facilities will provide additional opportunities for farmers and will potentially decrease the number of miles cattle must be transported.

“Expanded capacity in processing is a game-changer for local consumers and the livestock industry, and another step toward increasing access to local food. We want to ensure Mississippi has the necessary local food infrastructure to meet growing local demand, as well as guard against supply and distribution interruptions due to workforce and plant capacity challenges in other states. Through the expansion of currently operating USDA-inspected facilities and the construction of new USDA-inspected processing facilities, we are on track to more than double the livestock processing capacity in Mississippi,” said Commissioner Gipson.

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