



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
Mississippi Department of Agriculture & Commerce
Phone: (601) 359-1163 / Cell: (662) 312-5897
E-mail: paige@mdac.ms.gov

Hannah East, Marketing Specialist
Mississippi Department of Agriculture & Commerce
Phone: (601) 359-1179
Email: HannahE@mdac.ms.gov

Ag Commissioner Gipson Kicks-off 2022 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions

JACKSON, Miss. - Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson kicked off the 53rd Annual Sale of Junior Champions today by recognizing the collaborative efforts of the Mississippi State University Extension Service, FFA, and the Sale of Champions Promotion 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 through an auction.

Commissioner Gipson was joined by Dr. Gary Jackson, Mississippi State University Extension Service Director; Jill Wagner, Mississippi FFA State Advisor; Gary Blair, Chairman of the Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee; Billy Jade Chapman, FFA State President; Scotty Lovelace, owner of Harper & Morgan Rodeo; and Phillip Morgan, CEO of Southern AgCredit. Two Sale of Champions Scholarship recipients, Logan Johnson, from the West Lauderdale FFA/Lauderdale County 4-H, and Tatum Madden from the Covington County 4-H, gave remarks on how the livestock program has impacted their lives.

“I am proud of all of the 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors and scholarship recipients that are being recognized here today. Each of them have worked hard and earned the opportunity to be part of the Sale of Junior Champions. The skills and lessons that they are learning are preparing them to be our future leaders in agriculture,” said Commissioner Gipson.

This year 1,538 4-H and FFA members from across Mississippi participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Show showing 2,262 head of various livestock including pigs, sheep, cattle and goats. The animals will be sold for top dollar in the Sale of Champions. In addition, scholarships totaling \$62,000 will be awarded to 39 students.

“The Dixie National is the largest livestock show and PRCA Rodeo east of the Mississippi River. MSU Extension is always honored to bring over 1,200 4-Hers each year to exhibit their livestock. Youth development is really what the Dixie National Junior Livestock Show is about, and the Sale of Champions is a major highlight of the event. We want to congratulate our youth and express our appreciation to Mississippi’s business leaders who make the Sale of Champions and the scholarship program a reality,” said MSU Extension Director Dr. Gary Jackson.

The work of the Sale of Champions Promotion Committee has been the key to the success of the Sale for over 50 years. 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.

“As Chairman of the Committee, my main focus is trying to provide money for our scholarship recipients and our Sale of Champions participants,” said Gary Blair, Chairman of the Dixie National Sale of Champions Promotion Committee.

Over the past 52 years, the sale has grossed over \$8 million. Last year, the sale of 45 winning animals grossed \$389,425, and 38 scholarships were presented to 4-H and FFA members totaling \$60,000. Since the first scholarships were awarded in 1993, over 758 scholarships have been awarded to various 4-H and FFA members totaling over \$1 million.

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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Photo and outline attached.



Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson kicked off the Sale of Junior Champions today at the Trade Mart. He was joined by (left to right) Dr. Gary Jackson, Mississippi State University Extension Service Director; Scotty Lovelace, Owner of Harper & Morgan Rodeo; Commissioner Andy Gipson; Tatum Madden, Covington 4-H; Logan Johnson, West Lauderdale FFA/Lauderdale 4-H; Gary Blair, Chairman of the Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee; Billy Jade Chapman, FFA State President; Jill Wagner, Mississippi FFA State Advisor; and Phillip Morgan, CEO of Southern AgCredit.