



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

CINDY HYDE-SMITH
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Equipment Theft Investigation by MS Department of Agriculture Leads to Recovery

Jackson, Miss. -- On October 2, the Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau (MALTB), the law enforcement division of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, recovered numerous pieces of stolen equipment. The Bureau anticipates arrests and charges to be forthcoming in the future.

Lead MALTB Investigator, Mike Braswell, along with MALTB investigators, Mike McGowan and Sonny Vincent, and with assistance from Sheriff Greg Waggoner of the Leake County Sheriff's Office recovered approximately \$200,000 of equipment in Carthage, Miss. This includes a 7710 John Deere tractor, a 4520 John Deere tractor with a loader and bush-hog attachment, 569 John Deere hay baler, a Polaris 800 ranger, and a zero turn mower.

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith commended the investigators for their hard work and dedication and would like to thank Sheriff Waggoner and the Leake County Sheriff's Departments for assisting in this investigation. Jeff Stewart, Director of MALTB, says equipment theft is a re-occurring problem in the State of Mississippi and that owners should always be aware of where your equipment is and to always keep it out of sight and secured.

The Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau enforces laws to prevent the theft of livestock, timber, and agricultural products and investigates all agricultural crimes. The Bureau also handles the registration of all livestock brands in the State. The cost to register a brand is \$5 for a registration period of 5 years. To report or provide information regarding an agricultural crime, call (800) 678-2660.

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