



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

CINDY HYDE-SMITH  
COMMISSIONER

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Ag Commissioner Brings Dixie National to Patients at Blair E. Batson**

As a special kick-off to last weekend's rodeo extravaganza, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith visited patients at Blair E. Batson Children's Hospital. Commissioner Hyde-Smith was joined by Lecile Harris, the world-famous rodeo clown, the Express Clydesdales, 2014 Miss Mississippi High School Rodeo Queen Bergen Pitfield, 2015 Junior Miss Dixie National Gracie Newell, and 2015 Miss Dixie National Summer Weldon as they brought a part of Dixie National to the children at the hospital. Each child received a cowboy hat and a commemorative Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary bandana. The patients also had the opportunity to interact with and get autographs from Lecile the clown and Rodeo Queens in addition to meeting the 2,000 pound Clydesdale horses.

"Blair E. Batson is a truly remarkable facility, and the young, brave patients there have been through so much. We were thrilled to have the opportunity of bringing the celebrities and part of the excitement of the Dixie National Rodeo to those who were not physically able to make it to one of the shows," said Commissioner Hyde-Smith.

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**Photo and cutline attached.**



Last Friday, February 13, 2015, Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith, along with special rodeo guests, were delighted to bring part of the Dixie National Rodeo to patients at Blair E. Batson Hospital. Those pictured include: (left to right) Victoria Jones of Florence, Miss., Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith, 2014 Miss Mississippi High School Rodeo Queen Bergen Pitfield, 2015 Junior Miss Dixie National Gracie Newell, 2015 Miss Dixie National Summer Weldon, Izabella Jones of Florence, Miss., and rodeo clown Lecile Harris.