



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

CINDY HYDE-SMITH
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Hyde-Smith Announces School Garden Grant Program

Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith announced the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce will be taking applications for *Growing Lunch*, a school garden grant program, for the 2016-2017 school year.

Growing Lunch seeks to enhance Farm to School efforts across the state. It acts as an educational tool to enhance children's knowledge of agriculture, healthy eating and how food arrives on their plate three times a day. As society becomes increasingly removed from agricultural practices and the farm, it remains pertinent to educate students on the origin of their food.

Eligible schools can receive a grant of up to \$500 to purchase supplies needed to develop a school garden or to further enhance an existing school garden. All schools, K-12, in Mississippi are eligible to apply. This year, Mississippi preschools are also eligible to apply. It is encouraged that applicants have support from their local extension office or Master Gardeners.

This program is on a first come, first serve basis. Only one grant can be awarded per school. Schools that have received a *Growing Lunch* grant from MDAC in the past are not eligible to apply for additional funds at this time.

This project is funded through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program through the United States Department of Agriculture. For additional information or to view the application, visit the Alerts and Announcements section or Market Development Division webpage at www.mdac.ms.gov or contact Susan Head at (601) 359-1196 or susan@mdac.ms.gov.

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About the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce

Under the leadership of Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith, the mission of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is to protect and promote agricultural-related businesses within the state and to promote Mississippi's products throughout both the state and the rest of the world for the benefit of all Mississippi citizens. This is accomplished through many bureaus and departments within the agency including the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, Mississippi Farmers Market, Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau, Bureau of Plant Industry, Market Development Division and Bureau of Regulatory Services. To learn more about MDAC, visit www.mdac.ms.gov.