



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

CINDY HYDE-SMITH  
COMMISSIONER

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations**  
**Phone: (601) 359-1163**  
**E-mail: [paige@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:paige@mdac.ms.gov)**

### **Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce Hosted National Ag Day Celebration at the Farmers Market**

**JACKSON, Miss.** — The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce hosted a National Ag Day celebration at the Mississippi Farmers Market in an effort to raise awareness about the agriculture industry and recognize its importance.

Approximately 30 preschool students from Galloway United Methodist Church's Children Center participated in the event. The students had the opportunity to learn about beef and crop production by planting vegetables in the farmers market pizza garden and engaging in various other educational stations sponsored by the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association and the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation. Bonnie Plants generously donated the vegetables and herbs the students planted in the garden. In addition, the students were able to meet and interact with Mississippi Agriculture and Commerce Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith.

It was a pleasure to watch as the students began to understand where their food comes from, Hyde-Smith said.

"Agriculture is the number one industry in Mississippi, and it is vital that we educate all ages on its importance," she said. "I was thrilled to see not only the students, but the parents and teachers getting involved in our National Ag Day activities. We owe a big thanks to Bonnie Plants for donating the seedlings the students planted."

By participating in National Ag Day, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce did its part in sharing the impact agriculture has in the community, Hyde-Smith said.

"We enjoyed sharing our love for agriculture with the students at Galloway United Methodist Church on National Ag Day," she said. "To watch their faces as they dug in the soil and planted a vegetable for the first time is priceless."

Galloway United Methodist Church Children's Center Director Sharon Patterson said the students, teachers and parents were beyond excited to participate.

"Our kids are so excited," she said. "The parents really enjoyed walking to the farmers market and planting with their children. The teachers were so inspired by their visit that they asked me if we could plant our own raised garden. They have committed to taking care of it throughout the summer. For me, that was a real turning point."

Patterson said in her 23 years at the Children’s Center, she has hoped her teachers would see the value in planting and maintaining a garden.

“Because of this field trip and collaboration with the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, my teachers and children are now inspired,” she said. “That has been a goal of mine for a long time.”

The National Agriculture Council of America selects the date and theme of National Ag Day each year, and also sponsors many of the celebration’s events throughout the country. This year’s theme was “Agriculture: Food for Life.”

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**Photo attached.**



Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce hosted a National Ag Day celebration for students at Galloway United Methodist Church’s Children Center.