



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

CINDY HYDE-SMITH  
COMMISSIONER

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 28, 2017**

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

### **MDAC Accepting Applications for School Garden Grant Program**

**JACKSON, Miss.** —Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith recently announced that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is accepting applications for *Growing Lunch*, a school garden grant program, for the 2017-2018 school year.

*Growing Lunch* seeks to enhance farm-to-school efforts across the state. It acts as an educational tool to enhance the knowledge of school-aged children on agriculture, healthy eating and how food arrives on their plate three times a day.

“As the world becomes more removed from agriculture, it is necessary that we educate students on the origin of their food,” Hyde-Smith said. “The *Growing Lunch* program serves as the perfect way to incorporate agriculture in our schools, all while teaching skills applicable to other subjects.”

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 the State of Mississippi are eligible to apply.

“Since 2013, the *Growing Lunch* grant has been awarded to 50 schools across the state,” Hyde-Smith said. “It is amazing to hear some of the results that schools participating in the program are reporting back to us. Students’ attitudes when introduced to new fruits and vegetables are more positive, and they are more willing to try new foods when they actually grew them themselves.”

This school garden grant 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 more information about the program or to view the application, visit [www.mdac.ms.gov](http://www.mdac.ms.gov) or contact Susan Head at 601-359-1196 or [susan@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:susan@mdac.ms.gov).

###