Agriculture Commissioner Gipson Gives Summary of Farm Listening Tour

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson is wrapping up his statewide 2018 Genuine MS Summer Listening Tour. A top priority of Commissioner Gipson when taking office was to visit farms in all regions across the state getting personal feedback from the farmers on their issues, challenges and opportunities.

While it initially began as a tour comprised of 34 stops, it quickly evolved into a tour with visits in over 60 counties statewide. Gipson visited farms, both large and small, that grow some of Mississippi’s top commodities such as poultry, timber, cotton, soybeans, corn, beef cattle, dairy, catfish, peanuts and blueberries. In addition, he visited farms with niche crops such as Mississippi-grown tea, as well as agritourism operations.

“I appreciate all of those who welcomed me onto their farms and into their shops to let me know what is on their minds,” said Commissioner Gipson. “Our farmers and ranchers face numerous challenges, many of which they can’t control. This tour has allowed me to hear about these critical issues and their impacts directly from those that are affected every day.”

Commissioner Gipson listened as farmers voiced concerns on topics ranging from roads and bridges to trade, workforce availability and burdensome regulations. He has taken the information gleaned from the tour and is working on behalf of Mississippi farmers and ranchers to address these concerns. “The need for roads and bridges in our rural areas is critical, and I was able to help communicate just how crucial the condition of infrastructure like this can be to a farmer’s bottom line to our legislators. I want to thank Governor Phil Bryant and the Mississippi Legislature for taking quick action in addressing our rural state, county and municipal roads and bridges to help get commodities to the market,” said Gipson.

Gipson and staff at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) are discussing agency goals and devising plans to move Mississippi agriculture forward. “I heard a tremendous number of ideas and concerns from our farmers, ranchers, and landowners while on the road. Although the
Department can’t realistically address every issue, we are putting together a strategic plan of action to address as many as we can,” said Gipson.

Two recently announced initiatives were developed from ideas expressed during the tour. The Genuine MS International Agricultural Trade Initiative is being developed to create additional foreign market opportunities for producers and agribusinesses and increase investment in Mississippi. The MDAC Agriculture Internship Program is being designed to promote apprenticeships for Mississippi youth in agricultural related work. “The greatest investment we can make for Mississippi agriculture is in our young people, and we are making this our top priority,” said Gipson.

As part of his efforts to ensure that farmers have the tools and the freedom that they need to continue feeding and clothing the world, Commissioner Gipson is committed to working closely with federal agencies to rollback unnecessary regulations, and he plans to evaluate state regulations as well. One example is the recent rollback of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS) rule. Additionally, MDAC will continue to actively promote products grown, raised, crafted, and made in Mississippi through the Genuine MS program, which was launched in July.

Commissioner Gipson will be extending the farm tour into the fall to have the opportunity to visit additional areas of the state. To find out which areas of the state he will be touring, upload the tour map found at [https://www.mdac.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/Mississippi-Map.pdf](https://www.mdac.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/Mississippi-Map.pdf).

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Photo attached.
Map attached.

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson, along with his wife Leslie and two daughters, visited Clyde Magee’s watermelon, cantaloupe, tomato and vegetable farm in Smith County during his 2018 Genuine MS Summer Farm Listening Tour. This was one of many visits made by Commissioner Gipson to get personal feedback from farmers across the state on their issues, challenges and opportunities.
2018 Genuine Mississippi Farm Tour

1 - April 13 Lauderdale County
2 - May 11 Montgomery County
3 - May 14 Leake County
4 - May 31 Coahoma County
5 - June 1 Washington County
6 - June 4 Rankin County
7 - June 4 Forrest County
8 - June 5 George County
9 - June 5 Stone County
10 - June 6 Forrest County
11 - June 6 Pearl River County
12 - June 6 Perry County
13 - June 6 Lamar County
14 - June 8 Smith County
15 - June 9 Simpson County
16 - June 12 Attala County
17 - June 13 Tishomingo County
18 - June 13 Prentiss County
19 - June 14-15 Bolivar County
20 - June 15 Tate County
21 - June 15-16 DeSoto County
22 - June 16 Tunica County
23 - June 19 Marion County
24 - June 26 Adams County
25 - June 26 Jefferson County
26 - June 27 Tallahatchie County
27 - June 28-29 MS. State
28 - July 4 Alcorn County
29 - July 10-13 Hinds County
30 - July 12 Tippah County
31 - July 15-18 Hancock County
32 - July 15-18 Harrison County
33 - July 15-18 Jackson County
34 - July 19 George County
35 - July 19 Greene County
36 - July 19 Stone County
37 - Aug. 1-3 Neshoba County
38 - Aug. 7-8 Lee County
39 - Aug. 8 Itawamba County
40 - Aug. 8 Webster County
41 - Aug. 13 Scott County
42 - Aug. 13 Hinds County
43 - Aug. 13 Rankin County
44 - Aug. 15 Jones County
45 - Aug. 15 Covington County
46 - Aug. 16 Sunflower County
47 - Aug. 16 Bolivar County
48 - Aug. 20 Union County
49 - Aug. 20 Monroe County
50 - Aug. 23 Lownes County
51 - Aug. 23 Clay County
52 - Aug. 28 Calhoun County
53 - Aug. 29 Lee County
54 - Sept. 6 Winston County
55 - Sept. 4 Perry County
56 - Sept. 17 Lamar County
57 - Sept. 19 Hinds County
58 - Sept. 21 MS. State
59 - Sept. 21 Desoto County
60 - Sept. 21 Marshall County
61 - Sept. 24 Union County
62 - Sept. 24 Yalobusha County
63 - Sept. 25 Pontotoc County
64 - Sept. 27 Clarke County
65 - Sept. 27 Lauderdale County
66 - Oct. 2 Jones County
67 - Oct. 11 Wilkinson County
68 - Oct. 13 Lawrence County
69 - Oct. 19 Panola County
70 - Oct. 23 Warren County
71 - Oct. 25 Amite County
72 - Oct. 30 Franklin County
73 - Oct. 30 Lincoln County
74 - Oct. 31 Yazoo County
75 - Nov. 13 Neshoba County
76 - Dec. 6 Lafayette County
77 - TBD Choctaw County
78 - TBD Holmes County
79 - TBD Walthall County
80 - TBD Pike County

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