



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

Press Release

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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>.

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Photo attached.
Map attached.

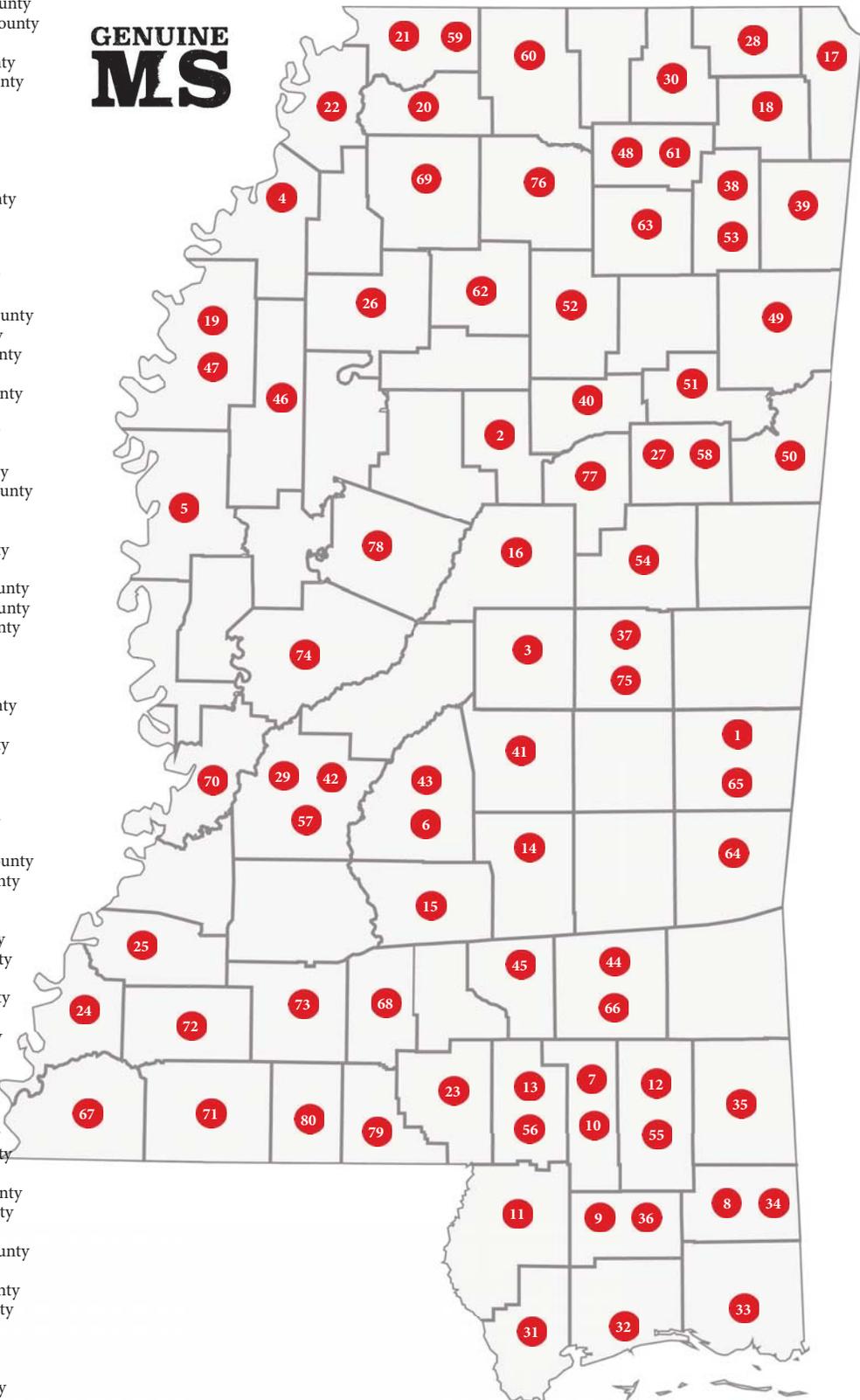


Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson, along with his wife Leslie and two daughters, visited Clyde Magee's watermelon, cantaloupe, tomato and vegetable farm in Smith County during his 2018 Genuine MS Summer Farm Listening Tour. This was one of many visits made by Commissioner Gipson to 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 Convington County
- 46 - Aug. 16 Sunflower County
- 47 - Aug. 16 Bolivar County
- 48 - Aug. 20 Union County
- 49 - Aug. 20 Monroe County
- 50 - Aug. 23 Lowndes County
- 51 - Aug. 23 Clay County
- 52 - Aug. 28 Calhoun County
- 53 - Aug. 29 Lee County
- 54 - Sept. 6 Winston County
- 55 - Sept. 14 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

**GENUINE
MS**



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