



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

ANDY GIPSON
Commissioner

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 6, 2019

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

ATP Trade Expansion Program to Benefit Mississippi Producers

JACKSON, Miss. — Based on input from its member Southern agriculture leaders including the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, the Southern U.S. Trade Association (SUSTA) recently applied for and was approved for \$12,592,090 over a three-year period from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help Southern farmers and ranchers identify and access new export markets through the federal Agricultural Trade Promotion Program (ATP). ATP was developed by USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue and the Trump Administration to help mitigate the adverse effects of other countries' tariff and non-tariff trade barriers. Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson, who serves as Vice President of SUSTA and a member of the SUSTA Executive Board, says that farmers in Mississippi will benefit from this trade expansion opportunity. In addition, for the first time ever, SUSTA's trade program will include promotion of southern yellow pine in new and emerging markets.

"I am delighted that the Southern U.S. Trade Association has been approved for this first-of-its-kind ATP program through USDA Secretary Perdue and the Trump Administration. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce will work closely with SUSTA to develop a trade plan that will wisely leverage these funds with our current international marketing efforts in order to further expand and explore new markets for Mississippi's agriculture commodities and products including southern yellow pine logs," said Commissioner Andy Gipson. "We will be reaching out to our farmers and businesses throughout Mississippi to make the most of this three-year trade expansion opportunity."

Eligible farmers and agribusiness from across the state will have the opportunity to participate in various trade activities such as in-bound and out-bound trade missions that will be conducted as part of the ATP.

"The grant awarded to SUSTA will help open a new era for international trade in Mississippi. Commissioner Gipson is to be commended for his determination and expertise in acquiring this support. It will be used for the benefit of the agriculture industry all across Mississippi," said Governor Phil Bryant.

In support of trade expansion efforts, President of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation Mike McCormick said, "The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation fully supports the Southern United States Trade Association and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce in their efforts to help Mississippi farmers and ranchers gain access to new export markets for their products. We also appreciate USDA Secretary Perdue and President Trump for establishing the ATP program and continuously supporting our farmers and ranchers. I highly encourage our Farm Bureau members to take advantage of the opportunities this new funding presents."

“Delta Council is excited about this new funding and trade expansion opportunity for our farmers and agribusinesses in the Mississippi Delta. Agriculture is the major economic driver of the Delta, and we look forward to the growth that can result from the development of new international markets for the commodities produced in the region,” said Executive Vice President of Delta Council Frank Howell.

The Southern U.S. Trade Association is made up of the departments of agriculture in 15 southern states and is chartered to facilitate exports of U.S. food and high value agricultural products by small to medium-sized companies in the region. SUSTA works closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in administering federal export promotion programs, especially the Market Access Program (MAP) along with investments by the states and individual companies. Companies interested in learning more about SUSTA’s global events program and cost-share program can find additional information by visiting SUSTA.org.

###