



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Sale of Junior Champions Celebrates 50 Years

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson kicked off the 50th Annual Sale of Junior Champions today by recognizing the collaborative efforts of the Mississippi State University Extension Service, FFA, and the Sale of Champions Committee in making the Sale of Junior Champions a success year after year.

Commissioner Gipson stressed the importance of investing in our youth and recognized the hard work and dedication of the youth livestock exhibitors like Rylie Melancon, Beef Cattle Premiere Exhibitor with Lincoln County 4-H.

“The most important investment that we can make is in our youth. Investing in youth livestock activities like the Sale of Junior Champions, whether it is financially or through an investment of time, is investing in our future. These 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors are the agricultural leaders of tomorrow,” said Commissioner Gipson. “The leadership skills that these young people are learning through their involvement with 4-H and FFA will guide them throughout their lifetime and result in a direct benefit to Mississippi.”

“How appropriate that we pause to celebrate the 50th Annual Sale of Junior Champions,” said Mississippi State University President Mark E. Keenum. “The partnership between MSU and the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo has long been meaningful to our university, as many 4-H and FFA members get their first significant exposure to the MSU and our wonderful Extension Service through this means. We’re grateful to Commissioner Gipson and the entire MDAC staff for keeping MSU’s ties to this important event strong and vibrant.”

Numerous 4-H and FFA students compete in district livestock shows with the goal of moving on to compete in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Show at the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo. This year 1,635 4-H and FFA members from across Mississippi participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Show showing 2,263 head of various livestock including pigs, sheep, cattle, and goats. The Junior Round-Up participants winning Champion and Reserve Champion for their market animals have

the opportunity to sell their livestock at the Sale of Junior Champions auction. The Sale of Junior Champions, made successful each year by the Mississippi State University Extension Service, is one of the highlight events of the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo.

“The honor of competing at this level in an independent livestock show motivates 4-H’ers and FFA exhibitors to do their best in and out of the ring, as they grow in responsibility, hard work, community service, and self-confidence. We value the opportunity to support MDAC and the committee as they recognize and reward Mississippi’s young leaders,” said Dr. Gary Jackson, Director of the MSU Extension Service. “Extension’s shared appreciation for the foundational life skills our young livestock exhibitors are learning makes our partnership with the Dixie National Sale Committee a pleasure and a privilege.”

Due to the generosity and dedication of the Sale of Champions Committee members, exhibitors participating in the Sale of Junior Champions receive top dollar for their livestock. Over the past 49 years, the sale has grossed over \$6.89 million. Last year, the sale of 43 winning animals grossed \$344,778. In addition, 37 scholarships were presented to 4-H and FFA members totaling \$58,000. This year 45 animals will be sold, and 37 scholarships will be awarded.

“It is always an honor and pleasure working with the Sale of Champions Committee to help provide scholarships to these deserving youth, as well as the opportunity for the top exhibitors to earn top dollar for their livestock during the sale, said Noel Daniels, Chairman of the Dixie National Sale of Champions Committee. “The committee values the chance to support these young people, and we encourage others to get involved and support them as well.”

The Sale of Junior Champions helps students earn money for college, as well as helps them to develop a wide host of skills. The youth participating in the livestock show spend months raising and caring for their livestock learning the value of hard work and responsibility.

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Pictures and cutlines attached.



Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson (right) is joined by MSU Extension Service Director Gary Jackson in kicking-off the 50th Annual Sale of Junior Champions, one of the highlight events of the Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo.



Noel Daniels, Chairman of the Dixie National Sale of Champions Committee, joins Andy Gipson, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, at the Sale of Junior Champions to recognize the hard work of all of the participants in the livestock shows.