



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI**  
**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**  
ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Ag Commissioner Gipson Visits Nature's Gourmet Farm in Petal**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson visited Nature's Gourmet Farm in Petal, touring the newly expanded on-farm poultry processing facility that is owned and operated by Ben Simmons. Others in attendance included State Senator Angela Hill and a customer of Nature's Gourmet Farm, Helen Rayburn.

The facility is currently being upgraded and expanded to comply with USDA specifications and is near completion. Meeting USDA specifications allows Nature's Gourmet Farm to increase its capacity to process poultry, and also provides the opportunity to enter into new markets such as retail stores and restaurants all over the country.

"Today is a great day for small farmers in Mississippi," said Commissioner Gipson. "This is the first of its kind pasture-raised poultry USDA processing plant in the state. As a USDA approved facility, Nature's Gourmet Farm will expand its market opportunities nationwide for poultry processed right here on the farm in Mississippi."

Nature's Gourmet Farm, located in Perry County, began operating in 2010 to provide grass-fed beef to local customers and diversified in 2012 with the addition of pastured poultry.

"One of the key trends today is to buy local from a farm that you know and can trust," says Simmons. "Again, all our products are grown and raised right here in Mississippi. We sell local to individuals as well as to several restaurants and store chains. So all of our products and money goes right back into our local economy."

Partial funding for the construction project was provided through the Mississippi Land, Water, and Timber Resources Program. For more information about the Nature's Gourmet Farm, follow them on Facebook or visit their website at [www.naturesgourmetfarm.com](http://www.naturesgourmetfarm.com).

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**Photo attached.**



**Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson visited Nature's Gourmet Farm in Petal, touring the newly expanded on-farm poultry processing facility, which is owned and operated by Ben Simmons. Pictured left to right are customer Helen Rayburn, State Senator Angela Hill, owners of Nature's Gourmet Farm, Ben Simmons and wife Beth, and Commissioner Gipson.**