



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Gipson Kicks-off Sale of Junior Champions

Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson kicked off the 51st 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 was joined by Dr. Reuben Moore, Interim Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry, and Vet-Med with Mississippi State University Extension Service; Jill Wagner, Program Supervisor of Mississippi Agricultural Education & FFA program with the Mississippi Department of Education; Ted Kendall IV, Chairman of the Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee; Dr. Dean Jousan, 4-H Livestock Specialist with Mississippi State University, Katie Barnes, Mississippi FFA State President from Neshoba County; James Carpenter, Mississippi FFA State Vice-President from Leake County; Hayley Hines, Mississippi FFA State Secretary from Forrest County; Grace Everett, Mississippi FFA State Reporter from Neshoba County; Oscar Martinez, Mississippi FFA State Sentinel from Jones County; and Lacy Raines, Union 4-H.

Commissioner Gipson stressed the importance of 4-H and FFA programs and the value they provide to youth across the state. He recognized the hard work and dedication of the youth livestock exhibitors.

“The most important investment that we can make is in our youth. The 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors and scholarship winners that you see today are Mississippi’s future agricultural leaders. The leadership skills that they are learning through their involvement with 4-H and FFA is providing them with a strong foundation. I commend the Mississippi State University Extension Service for their dedication to its strong 4-H program and to the Mississippi Department of Education for their work and support of FFA,” said Commissioner Gipson.

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 1,619 4-H and FFA members from across Mississippi participated in the Dixie National Junior Round-Up Livestock Show showing 2,221 head of various livestock including pigs, sheep, cattle, and goats. The Junior Round-Up participants winning Champion and Reserve Champion for their market animals 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.

“We are grateful for all the individuals, organizations, and agencies that work together to make this event possible,” said MSU Extension Director Dr. Gary Jackson. “It takes all of us to be able to have this livestock show and to celebrate it at the end with the annual Sale of Junior Champions. When I think about the Dixie National Junior Round-Up, I think about all the groups who come together to do this -- the volunteers, the Extension 4-H agents and FFA advisors -- who have brought their young people here, and the many businesses and industries who strongly support this event. At the end of the day, these people are supporting our youth. That’s what this is really about.”

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 50 years, the sale has grossed over \$7.2 million. Last year, the sale of 45 winning animals grossed \$382,775. In addition, 37 scholarships were presented to 4-H and FFA members totaling \$58,000. Since the first scholarships were given in 1993, over 683 scholarships have been awarded to various 4-H and FFA members totaling \$891,200. This year 46 animals will be sold, and 31 scholarships will be awarded.

The Sale of Champions Committee is proud to support our 4-H and FFA youth through scholarships and the opportunity for them to earn top dollar for the livestock that they have worked so hard to raise,” said Ted Kendall, IV, Chairman of the Dixie National Sale of Champions Committee. “We encourage others to get involved so we can continue to grow this program and impact the lives of our future leaders.”

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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Picture and outline attached.



Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson kicked off the Sale of Junior Champions today at the Trade Mart. He was joined by (left to right) Katie Barnes, Mississippi FFA State President from Neshoba County; Oscar Martinez, Mississippi FFA State Sentinel from Jones County; Grace Everett, Mississippi FFA State Reporter from Neshoba County; Lacy Raines, Union 4-H; Dr. Reuben Moore, Interim Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry, and Vet-Med with Mississippi State University Extension Service; Ted Kendall IV, Chairman of the Sale of Junior Champions Promotion Committee; Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson; Dr. Dean Jousan, 4-H Livestock Specialist with Mississippi State University; Jill Wagner, Program Supervisor of Mississippi Agricultural Education & FFA program with the Mississippi Department of Education; Hayley Hines, Mississippi FFA State Secretary from Forrest County; and James Carpenter, Mississippi FFA State Vice-President from Leake County.