

NEWS RELEASE

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SPELL ANNOUNCES LIVESTOCK FACILITY GRANT; 46 FACILITIES STATE-WIDE TO BENEFIT

Agriculture Commissioner Lester Spell says the first checks will soon be in the mail to 46 counties waiting on state money to help build new livestock facilities. Commissioner Spell announced today that \$5 million in General Obligation bonds whose funds will be used to provide grants to counties have been sold.

"We have received notice from the Department of Finance and Administration that the Livestock Grant Bonds have been sold," said Spell. "Funds have been deposited and we are currently processing payments on invoices we have already received." The department estimates the first checks should go out by the end of the month.

The grant program, begun in 1995, provided matching state funds (up to \$500,000) to counties and municipalities for the construction, renovation and expansion of livestock facilities. Since the program's inception, facilities have been built or planned in 57 of Mississippi's 82 counties (69%).

"This has been one of the most popular programs in the history of the department," said Spell. "The areas that have built facilities are already seeing new interest and excitement in agricultural events. We are very happy with how the program has developed."

Below is a list of counties scheduled to receive money from the bond issue. In some cases, a municipality is working with the county to build a facility. Some of the counties below already have their facilities and have been waiting for re-imburement from the state: Alcorn, Amite, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Claiborne, Coahoma, Copiah, Covington, Forrest, Franklin, Hancock, Harrison, Hinds, Jackson, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Leake, Lee, Leflore, Lincoln, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Montgomery, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Panola, Pearl River, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Rankin, Scott, Smith, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Walthall, and Yalobusha.