



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE
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COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FEBRUARY 8, 2007

Agriculture Means Big Business: Impact of State's Largest Industry and Rodeo Round-Up

Jackson, Miss. –Lester Spell, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, kicked-off the Dixie National Rodeo with the annual “Agriculture Round-Up Report” at the Mississippi Coliseum today. The Commissioner reported on the current status, future, and economic impacts of Mississippi agriculture and the Dixie National Rodeo and Livestock Show. In addition, agricultural specialist from Mississippi State University’s Agricultural Economics Department, Dr. Bill Herndon, Dr. John Anderson, Dr. Terry Hanson, Dr. Ken Hood, and Dr. Gregg Ibendahl, presented an outlook for Mississippi on the 2007 crop.

“Agriculture significantly impacts and benefits the entire state, not just those living in rural areas. The upcoming crop year looks to present many new and exciting opportunities for our farmers across all agricultural sectors. As we look to the future, agricultural industry will continue to play a major role not only here in Mississippi, but across our country as well,” said Spell. Outlook reports show that Mississippi will grow in areas of corn and wheat production with opportunities for increases in blueberries and sweet potatoes. Future export numbers show steady gains, and prospects for increased fruit and vegetable production still remain strong. All commodities will try to rebound from an extremely dry 2006 crop year, when drought conditions affected most Mississippi crop yields.

Agriculture is a \$5.8 billion industry in Mississippi which employs approximately 27 percent of the state’s workforce. Not to mention, agricultural events hold a tremendous impact on the retail, food, and hospitality sectors in the state. The economic impact of the Dixie National Rodeo and Livestock Show to Jackson in 2006 was reported at \$25 million. Last year approximately 150,000 people attended this ten day event, along with numerous Mississippi youth competing in the livestock showing events.

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