



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

CINDY HYDE-SMITH  
COMMISSIONER

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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#### **Mississippi Transportation Commission and Department of Agriculture Unveil New Agritourism Sign**

**JACKSON, MISS.** --- The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) introduced a new Agritourism Sign Program with the unveiling of directional signage for Mitchell Farms. The Agritourism Sign Program is a result of joint efforts between MDAC and the Mississippi Development Authority to introduce members of the Mississippi Agritourism Association to various resources available to their industry through other state agencies and organizations. With input from the associated stakeholders, MDOT developed rules, regulations, and guidelines for a new statewide signing program—the Agritourism Signing Program. In early 2012, the Mississippi Transportation Commission formally authorized the program, which will now allow qualified agritourism businesses to have directional signage on the right-of-way of state maintained highways.

Mitchell Farms, located in Collins, is the first agritourism operation to utilize the signage program. More than twenty other agritourism venues across the state are participating in the program as well. “Our family is very excited about the signage program MDOT has put in place for agritourism businesses in Mississippi,” commented Jo Lynn Mitchell, co-owner of Mitchell Farms. “This program came to fruition because a group of people came together, worked together, and made it happen. This is a great opportunity for our state to recognize two driving forces in its economy - agriculture and tourism,” added Mitchell.

“I appreciate the efforts of the Mississippi Department of Transportation in developing the Agritourism Sign Program which will bring much needed exposure to the wonderful agritourism operations that we are so fortunate to have in our state,” said Agriculture Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith. “Agritourism provides our farmers and landowners with a unique opportunity to demonstrate the importance of Mississippi’s largest industry - agriculture, while educating consumers, both young and old, on where their food actually comes from.”

In Mississippi, agritourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in agriculture and tourism as an increasing number of working farms and other agricultural enterprises are incorporating agritourism activities into their operations. These operations provide a unique experience for visitors by offering a variety of educational and fun attractions such as pumpkin patches, corn mazes, u-pick gardens, hay rides, seasonal festivals, and other activities.

“We are thrilled and honored to be a part of this special program that will help showcase one of Mississippi’s greatest attributes,” said the Mississippi Transportation Commission in a joint statement. “We are always happy to partner with other state agencies to promote the State of Mississippi.”

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**Photo and outline attached.**



( Left to right) Agriculture Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith, Jo Lynn Mitchell, and Nelda Mitchell showcase the directional sign to Mitchell Farms, an agritourism operation located in Collins, which was unveiled at the Mississippi Department of Transportation. The sign is available through the new Agritourism Sign Program offered by MDOT.