



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE
CINDY HYDE-SMITH
COMMISSIONER

MEDIA ADVISORY

For October 8, 2013

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 3, 2013

What: Mississippi Farm to School Week Celebration

Who: Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce & Mississippi Department of Education

Special Attendees: Commissioner of Agriculture Cindy Hyde-Smith; Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Billy Hudson; House Agriculture Committee Vice-Chairman Bill Pigott; Scott Clements, Director, Office of Healthy Schools, Mississippi Department of Education

When: Tuesday, October 8, 2013 – 11:40 a.m.

Where: Sherman Avenue Elementary School
2145 Sherman Avenue, Vicksburg, MS

Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce and Mississippi Department of Education to Celebrate Farm to School Week at Sherman Avenue Elementary

Jackson, Miss. –The first full week of October marks Mississippi Farm to School Week. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is collaborating with the Mississippi Department of Education to celebrate Mississippi Farm to School Week on Tuesday, October 8, at Sherman Elementary School in Vicksburg, Mississippi, where activities will begin at 11:40 a.m. At this time, students will have the opportunity to get to know the farmers that grew some of the Mississippi-grown items on the menu that day including cucumbers, butterbeans, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, collard greens, blueberries, and chicken. At 12:00 p.m., Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Billy Hudson, House Agriculture Committee Vice-Chairman Bill Pigott, Scott Clements, Director of the Office of Healthy Schools with the Mississippi Department of Education, and participating farmers will be joining the students for lunch.

The first full week in October was designated as Mississippi Farm to School Week by the Mississippi Legislature in 2012. Farm to School Week was introduced to encourage the serving of locally grown and locally raised agricultural products in school meals and to recognize the substantial economic health benefits of farm to school programs. Farm to School Week will draw attention to the vast number of crops that are grown in the state as well as serve as an educational tool to teach children where their food comes from.

During Farm to School Week, many schools around the state will be incorporating Mississippi grown products, including produce, into their menus and holding educational activities. The Delta Fresh Foods Initiative is planning farm visits for two elementary school classes and high school agricultural students, dedicating a high school agricultural class garden, and hosting a meet-and-greet for students, farmers, and school lunchroom staff. Good Food for Oxford Schools will have a visit from USDA Undersecretary Janey Thornton, and students will be taking field trips to local farms. Fresh Start at Emerson Family School in Starkville will have daily activities for the students including a guest chef to prepare a special lunch, a field trip to the Mississippi Modern Homestead Center, a Fall Harvest Fest, and lessons on nutrition. The Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi will be promoting farmers markets in several counties and will be using school garden produce for classroom lessons and snacks. Mississippians Engaged in Greener Agriculture (MEGA) will be planting a school garden at Brooks Elementary in Shelby. The Stone County School District will be serving local produce and hosting farm visits to schools. The North Delta Produce Growers Association will be providing produce to schools in Quitman County. The Mississippi Association of Cooperatives will be providing local produce to schools and holding educational demonstrations with farmers at schools. The Grace Outreach Community Development Center in Greenville will be utilizing aquaponics to demonstrate how to grow fresh vegetables and fish year-round.

October was designated as National Farm to School Month, by the National Farm to School Network, founded in 2007. Today, Farm to School programs exist in all 50 states. School officials that would like more resources regarding Farm to School Week and Farm to School Month can visit www.farmtoschoolweek.org, a website created by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

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Media is invited to attend. Please report to the main office upon arrival.

Sherman Avenue Elementary located at 2145 Sherman Avenue in Vicksburg is situated off Highway 61 across from River Region Medical Center.

Directions to Sherman Avenue Elementary School – From Interstate 20, merge onto US 61 N (exit 5A) towards Rolling Fork. Travel 1.9 miles. Turn left onto Sherman Avenue which is just past River Region Drive. Turn right to stay on Sherman Avenue. Sherman Avenue Elementary on the right. When you enter the school driveway and come up to the school, turn left and go around what appears to be the back of the building. This will take you to the parking lot and main entrance of Sherman Avenue Elementary. Follow the covered walkway to the main entrance of the building. The office is straight ahead as you walk in the doors. Please note that school is located at the same site as Warren Central Intermediate School so you may see signs for it as well.