



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

CINDY HYDE-SMITH
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Commissioner Hyde-Smith Announces School Garden Grant Program

Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, Cindy Hyde-Smith, announced that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) will be taking applications for a new school garden grant program, *Growing Lunch*.

Growing Lunch seeks to enhance the Farm to School effort across the state. Farm to School provides locally-grown produce to the state's schools and also seeks to educate students on agriculture.

Eligible schools can receive a grant up to \$500 to purchase supplies needed to develop a school garden. All schools, grades K-12, in the State of Mississippi are eligible to apply. Schools that already have a school garden may apply for funds to further enhance their school garden. It is encouraged that schools applying have support from their local extension office or Master Gardeners. This program is on a first come, first serve basis. Only one grant can be awarded per school.

This program will act as an educational tool to enhance the knowledge of school-aged children on agriculture, healthy eating, and how food arrives on their plate three times a day. As society becomes increasingly further away from agricultural practices and the farm, it remains pertinent to educate students on the origin of their food. MDAC has designated a website for those interested in the Farm to School Program and educational resources and materials for Farm to School Week, www.farmtoschoolweek.org.

Growing Lunch is funded through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program through the United States Department of Agriculture. For additional information, you may visit <http://www.mdac.ms.gov/departments/marketing/lunchgarden.htm>, contact Susan Head at (601) 359-1196, or email susan@mdac.ms.gov.

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