

Mississippi Farm Bureau® Federation Agricultural News and Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hyde-Smith honored with Distinguished Service Award

Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith of Lincoln County is the recipient of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation's 2013 Distinguished Service Award. The presentation was made during the organization's annual membership meeting in December.

Commissioner Hyde-Smith, who is a former senator and chair of the Senate Ag Committee, says that throughout her years of service to the people of Mississippi, she has talked with farmers who share a lot of the same concerns and dreams she has for Mississippi agriculture.

"They told me they wanted a market where they could sell their crops for a reasonable profit and with sensible regulations that promote a safe product and ensure sustainability," she said. "That is our goal at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

"We have a lot of very ambitious goals for the Ag Museum," she said. "We are looking to make vast improvements to the Coliseum, Trade Mart and show barns. The renovation of the Coliseum depends on legislation, and we look forward to the legislative session and those opportunities.

"There will be new restrooms on the midway for the 2014 Mississippi State Fair," she said. "We just signed a new contract with North American Midway that includes many improvements. They also refurbished the carousel at the Ag Museum, which is a beautiful piece of history. It was built in the 1920s and is restored for our visitors."

Commissioner Hyde-Smith is proud of the 154th Mississippi State Fair.

“My goal for attendance was 700,000. I was told that we had never reached that milestone,” she said. “With sincere prayers for good weather and a little Internet finesse, we had 706,588! We broke the historic record. For a state that has a population of 2.8 million, that's pretty good. For the first time in the United States, we had a mobile app for Apple and Android devices just for the fair. We had close to 9,000 downloads. We live in a changing world, and our agency adapts quite nicely. We have great employees.”

Commissioner Hyde-Smith says she feels that production agriculture will face challenges with radical groups who want to control many areas of livestock farming. Farmers must be prepared.

“We know the significance and challenges of producing enough food to feed this country and many others,” she said. “Although farmers and ranchers are easygoing by nature, I feel that it's time to establish the efforts necessary to take these groups to task and protect the harvest.”

Commissioner Hyde-Smith says Farm Bureau is more than up for the challenge. She is proud of its record of accomplishments on behalf of Mississippi farmers.

“There is no stronger organization involved in legislative affairs than Farm Bureau,” she said. “When you are trying to get bills passed, you have this group that is extremely forceful without arrogance. They are there when you need them, and they come to the table. They are such a resource for good legislation. The Voice of Agriculture® is a truly fitting description for Farm Bureau, especially in the Legislature and Congress.”

In conclusion, Commissioner Hyde-Smith says she is blessed to be raising her daughter, Anna-Michael, a fifth-generation farmer, on a family farm in Brookhaven. Lincoln County Livestock, the family's cattle auction, also provides them an opportunity to work as a family, along with Michael's parents, in a profession that they all love.

“It has been an extra blessing to me, as a mom, to have Anna-Michael showing reining horses, and that provides such special family time. Family time is so important, whether at the horse show or the stockyard.

“It has been an awesome journey, and I am so honored to serve you as your commissioner,” she said. “It is very inspiring to be a part of the future of agriculture in Mississippi. I want to provide programs that will enhance and benefit not only production agriculture but the state as a whole. Agriculture is our state’s number-one industry, so we have a lot of opportunities to capitalize on what we do so well.

“Mississippi has been blessed for the past two years with superb crop seasons. Records in row crop yields and high prices have benefitted many of our farmers across the state. The main components of these successful seasons have been attributed to not only hard work and dedicated farmers but the assistance of favorable weather from the good Lord up above.”

The Distinguished Service Award is the highest honor Farm Bureau bestows on an individual, and it is reserved for someone who has truly made a difference in the lives of Mississippi farmers.



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The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation is the state's largest general farm organization with more than 190,000 member-families statewide. There are Farm Bureaus in all 82 counties in Mississippi where agriculture comprises a fundamental part of Mississippi's economy. Headquartered in Jackson, the federation is an independent, non-profit agricultural organization and is not associated with any arm of the government. For more information about Farm Bureau, visit our website at www.msfb.org.