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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 22, 2020**

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## MDAC Modifies Cost-Share Program to Aid Farmers Impacted by COVID-19

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is modifying the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handline Practices (GHP) certification cost-share program by increasing allowable reimbursement in an effort to aid farmers impacted by COVID-19.

"MDAC has increased the reimbursement amount of the cost-share program for Mississippi farmers to provide financial assistance to cover the cost of GAP/GHP certification," said Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson. "This program will reimburse farmers that have successfully passed certification for 75 percent of the cost up to a maximum of $750 per year, instead of the previous limit of $500 per year."

GAP/GHP audits are voluntary independent audits of produce suppliers throughout the production and supply chain. GAP/GHP audits focus on best agricultural practices to verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards.

Audits must be completed by an approved USDA certifier and reimbursement is for the initial audit only. Farmers can then submit the combined amount of the actual audit and the USDA service charge. To qualify, applicants must be a Mississippi producer and the farm must be located within the state of Mississippi. Only audits for specialty crops are eligible for reimbursement. Specialty crops are defined as fruit, vegetable, tree nuts, and horticulture and floriculture items.

Applicants must complete a reimbursement application and attach a copy of the audit bill, score sheet and documentation of the payment made. Visit https://www.mdac.ms.gov/bureaus-departments/market-development/gapghp-certification-cost-share-program/ for more information. For any questions regarding the cost-share program, please contact Susan Lawrence at (601) 213-7542 or by email at Susan@mdac.ms.gov.

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