

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE & COMMERCE**

5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR THE FISCAL YEARS 2026 – 2030

401-00

# MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & COMMERCE

## 1. Comprehensive Mission Statement

The Legislature created the Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) in 1906 to be under the direction of the Commissioner of Agriculture & Commerce. The mission is to help promote, protect, and regulate agricultural businesses, related industries, and their products within both the local and global market and to promote agricultural and industrial development in Mississippi. The Department strives to ensure the utmost consumer confidence in food protection, fairness in the marketplace, and validation of product quality while practicing efficiency in government for the citizens of the State of Mississippi.

## 2. Philosophy

MDAC is dedicated to the promotion and protection of Mississippi's agricultural industry and associated businesses. The Department's core values include efficiency in the workplace, reliance on cross-trained, educated staff, and a philosophy of unbiased fairness to both industry and its consumers in the field of agriculture and commerce.

## 3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

MDAC is a broad and multifaceted agency that has oversight and multiple responsibilities to both industry and the consuming public. These policy areas that are listed below are considered by the Department to have equal importance in relation to the duties assigned by the Mississippi Legislature. These goals are tied to the success of the state's economic development, public safety, natural resources, and education.

- Statewide Goal: To develop and maintain a viable economic impact that serves the State of Mississippi and its agricultural community, offering outreach, marketing opportunities, and public service.

Relevant Benchmark: Financial balance that allows for future viability and growth to further the missions of MDAC.

- Statewide Goal: To benefit the State's youth and agricultural community by making available quality education programs in relation to livestock, animal husbandry, and outreach programs through FFA and 4-H organizations.

Relevant Benchmark: Number of outreach and awareness programs, as well as participation in these programs from youth entries.

- Statewide Goal: To protect the public's safety, provide assurance of product quality, and ensure fairness in the marketplace. This includes the areas of food safety and inspection, food establishment sanitation, price verification, product effectiveness, security of agricultural commodities, and truth-in-labeling.

Relevant Benchmark: Percentage compliance for meat inspection, retail food establishments, petroleum establishments, the measurement of scales used in commerce, the protection of agricultural commodities from theft, and the marketplace inspection of seed, fertilizer, lime, pesticides, feed, and plant amendments.

- Statewide Goal: To prevent the establishment and spread of invasive and/or destructive diseases, insects, and plants that would be a danger and risk to our natural resources, cropping systems, related industry, and native ecosystem.

Relevant Benchmark: Percentage of surveys and inspections that help eradicate, control, maintain, or prevent the establishment, spread, or introduction of species that would be a detriment to our agricultural producers, the surrounding ecosystems, and related industries that we serve and protect.

- Statewide Goal: To make available quality education, technical service, and outreach programs to Mississippi's agricultural producers, agribusinesses, product consumers, and the overall public.

Relevant Benchmark: Measurements and percentage collection of outreach and awareness programs that target

the education, preservation, technical service, assistance, implementation, and demonstration of agriculture and timber programs targeted for the agricultural and timber community, as well as the public.

#### **4. Overview of the Agency 5-Year Strategic Plan**

The duties assigned under law to MDAC are very broad and comprehensive with an emphasis on the promotion, protection, assistance, and regulation of agricultural related producers and businesses within the state. To carry out its mandated duties in a diligent and efficient manner, MDAC has established several goals and priorities for the next five years.

The biggest change that has happened, as of July 1, 2020, MDAC has absorbed all the properties, responsibilities, and duties of the Mississippi Fair Commission, pursuant to House Bill 1566 (2020).

The Regulatory Bureau also anticipates that, considering the state budget reductions, extra training and coursework will be required for inspectors to accomplish additional cross-training. The Department anticipates an increase in funding requests for travel to attend mandatory training sessions.

With the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill legalizing the commercial cultivation of Industrial Hemp, the Mississippi Legislature passed, and the Governor signed Senate Bill 2725, which legalized hemp in Mississippi. However, because no appropriation was attached to the bill, USDA will continue to enforce the licensing and cultivation of hemp. Congress is currently working to pass the 2024 Farm Bill. The 2024 Farm Bill will most likely implement regulatory changes regarding hemp across the U.S. MDAC will work closely with the Mississippi Legislature to implement any necessary regulatory changes regarding hemp. MDAC has reserved the right to have its own hemp program in the future, should funding become available. Such funds would be used for:

- Assisting Plant/Pesticide Director in registration of all Industrial Hemp Cultivation Program permits and licensing fee collection.
- Assisting in processing new applications, providing on-line technical support and instructing the public on how to apply for programs.
- Verify background applications, seed/plant source verification, maintain accounts, and process inspection and sample test results.

The Department plans to add an international trade division. The purpose of that division will be to explore new export markets for Mississippi agricultural products and enterprises. The Department anticipates hiring a division director for this position with a salary of \$60,000 and an administrative assistant to assist both this division and others. The Department anticipates increased travel costs to support this division and its goal of expanding markets for agriculture. Additionally, the Department plans to bring buyers to Mississippi on inbound trade missions and host agricultural timber trade business to business meetings.

The Department has established a timber division within the Department to act as a liaison between stakeholders, including, but not limited to producers, buyers, educators, associations and other government agencies for the Mississippi forestry and timber industry to expand opportunities for the industry in markets both domestically and internationally.

MDAC recently received authority for several new positions, but funding was not appropriated. Those positions include three new ag theft investigators and a new nuisance wildlife specialist. Funding for these needed positions will be requested in the next legislative session.

Over the next five years, the Department estimates that other needs and support will be forthcoming due to the multiple cooperative agreements that both the Regulatory Bureau and the Bureau of Plant Industry have with the federal government to implement multiple inspection, monitoring, and eradication programs on a cost sharing basis.

## 5. Agency's External/ Internal Assessment

Some of the more significant factors that may affect agency performance are as follows:

- 1) Changes in policy at the federal government level and the resulting loss or gain of federal grant funds necessary to operate cooperative programs.
- 2) Changes in the economic business environment that directly affect the retail establishments regulated by MDAC.
- 3) The impact of the economic environment in the State of Mississippi.
- 4) Changes in state and federal statutes and regulations.
- 5) The rise and fall of supply and demand in relation to agricultural imports and the resulting safety factors.
- 6) Technological changes and advances.
- 7) Natural disasters and other environmental factors that may affect businesses, crops, or both.
- 8) Fluctuations in fuel and petroleum product costs.
- 9) Outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries or private businesses.

MDAC uses an internal management system to evaluate its performance that consists of a Commissioner who is elected by a statewide vote and who sets the direction and policies for the agency. In turn, the Commissioner utilizes senior bureau directors to closely monitor performance and make policy recommendations as well as suggestions for improvements and correction of deficiencies. Division directors administer the policies recommended and approved by the Commissioner. Also, a branch director position handles the establishment of a comprehensive system to collect data on performance, analyze that data, and compare it to agency goals and objectives.

MDAC uses various information management systems to track inspections and compile permitting information for the review of performance measures, as well as for state and federal reporting purposes. These systems provide MDAC management with a tracking tool for progress, efficiency, cross-training opportunities, and management of staff and resources, thus providing management with the information necessary to formulate performance measurements. In addition, this data is provided to other agencies and groups which MDAC interacts and works in cooperation with, such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Department of Commerce, and various state agencies both in Mississippi and throughout the country.

This data is then used to further enhance and maintain the utmost efficiency within the agency. The data is utilized by directors and management staff during MDAC's internal review process in which each division is responsible for reporting mid-year and yearly goals to the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner. Strategic planning and future short-term and long-term goals are then tied to the division's output and to employee performance appraisals which allow for appropriate employee and task evaluation for better performance.

## 6. Agency Goals, Strategies, and Measures by Program for FY2025 through FY2029:

*(Programs are not listed in any order.)*

<b>Program 1: Bureau of Plant Industry</b>
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### **Goal A: Pesticide Program - Enforce and regulate the registration, distribution and application of pesticides.**

*(Mississippi Pesticide Law of 1975, Sections 69-23-1 through 69-23-29, Mississippi Pesticide Application Act of 1975, Sections 69-23-101 through 69-23-135, Regulation of Professional Services Law of 1938, Sections 69-19-1 through 69-19-15, and Agricultural Aviation Licensing Law of 2009, Sections 69-21-101 through 69-21-128)*

**Objective A.1** Reduce the risk of chemical exposure to human health and the environment from misuse and unlawful sale, distribution, or use of pesticides.

*Outcome:* Percent of marketplace inspection in full compliance.

*Outcome:* Percent of dealer inspections in full compliance.

*Outcome:* Percent of agricultural and non-agricultural pesticide application inspections in full compliance.

*Outcome:* Percent of agricultural and non-agricultural record inspections in full compliance.

**A.1.1. Strategy:** Conduct inspections under the EPA through the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). In addition to FIFRA, the BPI works with Mississippi State University Extension Service (MSUES) when special needs arise.

*Output:* Number of pesticide related inspections.  
*Output:* Number of dealer inspections in full compliance.  
*Output:* Number of agricultural and non-agricultural pesticide application inspections in full compliance.  
*Output:* Number of agricultural and non-agricultural record inspections in full compliance.  
*Output:* Number of marketplace inspections in full compliance.  
*Efficiency:* Percent of inspections resulting in non-compliance.  
*Explanatory:* Federal budget cuts, unfunded federal mandates, and employee retention all impact efficiency and productivity.

**Goal B: Plant Pest Programs - Prevent the spread of destructive insects, diseases, and other pests endangering Mississippi's agricultural, horticultural, and apiary industries and environment.** (*Mississippi Plant Act of 1918, Sections 69-25-1 through 69-25-47, Mississippi Boll Weevil Management Act of 1993, Sections 69-37-1 through 69-37-41, Mississippi Bee Disease Act of 1920, Sections 69-25-101 through 69-25-109*)

**Objective B.1** Monitor for and provide for the prevention, control, and eradication of plant pests and diseases that threaten Mississippi's agricultural, horticultural, and apiary industries and environment.

*Outcome:* Percent of nurseries/nursery dealer inspections free of pests and/or diseases. *Outcome:* Percent of agricultural commodities pest free for export to other states and countries.

*Outcome:* Percent of surveys free of plant pests that are currently not known to exist in Mississippi and eradicate or manage any that may be detected.

*Outcome:* Percent of inspections and certifications free of honeybee pests and/or diseases for interstate movement.

**B.1.1. Strategy:** Conduct plant protection and quarantine programs and activities, including honeybee inspections to ensure materials are free from injurious pests and diseases. Additionally, the BPI partners with the USDA and MSUES for many of its quarantine and regulated pest diseases.

*Output:* Number of nursery/nursery dealers licensed.

*Output:* Number of phytosanitary certificates issued.

*Output:* Number of acres and traps inspected or surveyed for the presence of pests and diseases.

*Output:* Number of colonies inspected and/or certified for the presence of pests and diseases.

*Efficiency:* Percent of inspections resulting in non-compliance.

*Explanatory:* Federal budget cuts, unfunded federal mandates, and employee retention all impact efficiency and productivity.

**Goal C: Feed, Fertilizer, Lime, and Plant Amendments - Enforce and regulate the sale and use of feeds, fertilizers, agricultural liming materials, and plant amendments.** (*Mississippi Commercial Feed Law of 1972, Sections 75-45-151 through 75-45-195, Mississippi Fertilizer Law of 1972, Sections 75-47-1 through 75-47-39, Mississippi Agricultural Liming Materials Act of 1993, Sections 69-39-1 through 69-39-19, Mississippi Soil and Plant Amendment Law of 1978, Sections 69-24-1 through 69-24-27*)

**Objective C.1** Ensure through sampling and inspections that feed, fertilizer, agricultural liming materials, and plant amendments meet requirements set by federal and state laws, rules and regulations.

*Outcome:* Percent of feed, fertilizer, agricultural liming materials, and plant amendment inspections in compliance.

**C.1.1. Strategy:** Inspect and sample the manufacturing sites and retail outlets where these products are produced or distributed to ensure label guarantees.

*Output:* Number of feed, fertilizer, agricultural liming materials, and plant amendments products inspected.

*Efficiency:* Percent of inspections resulting in non-compliance.

*Explanatory:* Unfunded federal mandates and employee retention all impact efficiency and productivity.

## Program 2: Museum

**Goal A: To serve as an interpretation center for the promotion of agriculture.** (*Miss. Code Ann. Section 69-1-13*)

**Objective A.1.** To ensure that the visitor to the Museum has an experience that is pleasing to view, enjoyable to participate in, and one that adds to the quality of life to all of those who visit.

*Outcome:* Percent change in revenue from private functions.

*Outcome:* Percent change in number of private revenue generating functions.

*Outcome:* Percent increase in attendance from prior year.

*Outcome:* Percent increase of school students in attendance from prior year.

**A.1.1. Strategy:** Develop media to convey the Museum message including wayside graphics, exhibits, brochures, programming, special events, and campus way finding system.

*Output:* Increase number of private revenue generating functions.

*Output:* Increase total number of attendees.

*Output:* Increase number of students in school groups.

*Efficiency:* Increase revenue generated from functions.

**A.1.2. Strategy:** Increase educational strategic partnerships with business, non-profit, and governmental organizations.

*Output:* Number of partnerships entered.

*Efficiency:* Expand visibility of Museum out to persons outside of agriculture and attract new visitors.

## Program 3: Regulatory

**Goal A: Consumer Protection Division - Maintain a high inspection rate in retail food establishments** (*Miss. Code Ann. Section 69-1-18*)

**Objective A.1.** Effectively and routinely inspect small capacity scales in grocery stores, convenience stores, and other retail stores to ensure they are accurate at the end of each fiscal year.

*Outcome:* Annually inspect for accuracy all small capacity scales in inventory.

**A.1.1. Strategy:** Using Winwam software, recognize and locate all scales in the state inspected by the Division.

*Output:* Percent of scales inspected.

*Efficiency:* Average cost per inspection.

*Explanatory:* Utilize best management practices for efficient use of time and funds expended for annual scale inspections. The number of scales inspected may fluctuate based on the opening and closing of retail establishments and/or whether businesses remove scales from service. Inspection numbers may fluctuate from the previous year based on whether the Department is at full staff.

**Objective A.2.** Enforce rules and regulations regarding the sanitation of retail food establishments

*Outcome:* Percent of total retail food sanitation inspections.

*Outcome:* Percent of consumer complaints answered within 48 hours.

**A.2.1. Strategy:** Conduct routine sanitation inspections in all retail food establishments.

*Output:* Number of retail food establishments licensed.

*Output:* Number of food sanitation inspections.

*Output:* Number of consumer complaints.

*Efficiency:* Average cost per inspection.

*Explanatory:* Safer foods and shopping environments for consumers. The number of sanitation inspections depends on the number of retail establishments that are licensed. These could increase or decrease depending on whether stores close and new ones open.

**Objective A.3.** Ensure the proper net weights of certain foods

*Outcome:* Percent of food products placed off-sale due to non-compliance with labeled net weight.

**A.3.1. Strategy:** Monitor and assess the net weights and prices of store-packaged meat products via annual and seasonal inspections.

*Output:* Number of food products inspected for net weight.

*Efficiency:* Average cost per inspection.

*Explanatory:* Protect consumers when purchasing pre-packaged weight items. The number of inspections may vary depending on staff capacity.

**Objective A.4.** Effectively monitor catfish truth-in-labeling in restaurants

*Outcome:* Annually inspect all restaurants selling catfish or catfish-like products for compliance with catfish labeling laws.

**A.4.1. Strategy:** Conduct inspections to discern country-of-origin and method-of-production labeling of catfish and catfish-like fish in restaurants.

*Output:* Percent of restaurants inspected.

*Efficiency:* Average cost of inspection.

*Explanatory:* Protect consumers' right to choose their foods and to prevent food fraud. These numbers could fluctuate based on whether a restaurant discontinues sales of these products.

**Goal B: Weights and Measures Division - Conduct inspections and testing pursuant to the Mississippi Code of 1972 and MS Department of Agriculture and Commerce Regulations in support thereof (Miss. Code Ann. Section 75-27-1).**

**Objective B.1.** Annually inspect and test all scales of heavy capacity (equal to and greater than 10,000 pounds) and small and intermediate capacity (less than 10,000 pounds), that are being used in commerce and assigned to the division, to ensure equity in the marketplace.

*Outcome:* Percent of all scales in inventory inspected.

**B.1.1 Strategy:** Maintain an accurate database using WinWam Software to locate all heavy, small, and intermediate capacity scales to allow for efficient annual inspection and testing.

*Output:* Number of scales in inventory.

*Efficiency:* Average cost per inspection.

*Explanatory:* The output varies based on external factors such as weather conditions, whether a business is still in existence, as well as, whether scales are removed from service and staffing numbers. Scales are not required to be registered so the output may increase where new ones are located.

**Objective B.2.** Annually inspect and measure all grain moisture meters, mass flow meters, and dairy tanks, which are being used in commerce, to ensure equity in the marketplace.

*Outcome:* Percent of grain moisture meters, mass flow meters and dairy tanks inspected.

**B.2.1 Strategy:** Maintain accurate measuring devices and ascertain the moisture content of agricultural products.

*Output:* Number of meters inspected.

*Efficiency:* Average cost per inspection.

*Explanatory:* The output varies based on external factors such as whether a business is still in existence, as well as whether meters are removed from service and staffing numbers. Protects farmers selling grains to third parties when determining moisture content of products being sold.

**Objective B.3.** Annually inspect pulpwood receiving facilities, timber receiving facilities, livestock facilities, and weighmaster facilities to ensure compliance with Title 75, Chapter 29, Pulpwood Scaling and Practices law.

*Outcome:* Percent of pulpwood receiving facilities, timber receiving facilities, livestock facilities, and weighmaster facilities inspected.

*Outcome:* Percent of livestock barns inspected for proper licensure.

**B.3.1 Strategy:** Maintain a list of all pulpwood/timber dealers, livestock permit holders, and weighmasters engaging in public weighing in the State. Ensure that they are licensed and bonded and that any scales they are using to weigh are accurate and meet all applicable requirements.

*Output:* Number of scales and facilities inspected.

*Output:* Number of livestock barns licensed.

*Efficiency:* Average cost per inspection.

*Explanatory:* Protects timber and livestock farmers and ranchers when selling their commodity by weights. The output varies based on external factors such as whether a business is still in existence, as well as whether scales are removed from service and staffing numbers.

**Goal C: Petroleum Products Inspection Division – Ensure the quality and quantity of fuel purchased by the consumer in the State of Mississippi** (*Miss. Code Ann. Section 75-55-1*)

**Objective C.1.** Provide the consumer with the confidence that he/she is receiving full value for payment and assure equity in the marketplace.

*Outcome:* Percent of consumer complaints answered within 48 hours.

*Outcome:* Percent of retail motor fuel devices inspected.

**C1.1. Strategy:** Inspect each site within the state annually to ensure quantity.

*Output:* Number of retail motor fuel devices inspected.

*Efficiency:* Average cost per inspection.

*Explanatory:* The output varies based on staffing numbers, and whether new businesses are opened and others close. Protects consumers to ensure that the correct quantity of fuel is received.

**C1.2. Strategy:** Provide technical assistance through the use of a computer software program allowing instantaneous reporting from the field to the office.

*Output:* Number of inspection reports provided to the public.

*Efficiency:* Cost savings to the consumer when documentation is necessary for legal action.

*Explanatory:* Provide instantaneous inspection results to the office for reporting to consumers and assist with reconciliation of complaints.

**Goal D: Meat Inspection Division – To protect the health and welfare of consumers by assuring that meat and poultry are safe, wholesome, unadulterated, and properly marked, labeled, and packaged** (*Miss Code Ann Section 75-35-1*)

**Objective D.1.** The Meat Inspection Division shall develop and administer a meat inspection program that is at least equal to the USDA meat inspection program.

*Outcome:* The Meat Inspection Division is at least equal to the USDA program per legal agreement.

*Outcome:* An accredited state program.

**D.1.1. Strategy:** Maintain a well-trained staff.

*Output:* 100% new hire attendance of inspection methods training and 100% completion of yearly required USDA training by all employees.

*Efficiency:* Maintains experts in the field.

*Explanatory:* Promotes consumer confidence; depends on federal funds. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

**Objective D.2.** Enforce rules and regulations regarding the inspection of all meat plants.

*Outcome:* Protect the health and welfare of consumers.

**D.2.1. Strategy:** Provide daily inspection services to every operating meat plant.



*Output:* Inspector performs 100% of applicable inspection tasks for each meat plant shift daily.

*Efficiency:* Meets the criteria of the USDA.

*Explanatory:* Provides safer foods for consumers; depends on federal funds. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

**D.2.2. Strategy:** Provide ante mortem and postmortem inspection to every animal presented for inspection

*Output:* 100% inspection before and after slaughter.

*Efficiency:* Meets the criteria of the USDA.

*Explanatory:* Provides safer foods for consumers; depends on federal funds. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

**Objective D.3.** Ensure meat handlers are in compliance with the law.

*Outcome:* Protect the health and welfare of consumers.

**D.3.1. Strategy:** Inspect every meat handler to ensure compliance with meat laws.

*Output:* Completion of Notices of Warning for each violation.

*Efficiency:* 100% of Notices of Warning shall be completed and closed monthly.

*Explanatory:* Provides safer foods for consumers. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

**Objective D.4.** Ensure rendering vehicles meet standards set forth in The Animal and Poultry By-Products Disposal Law of 1964.

*Outcome:* Percent of rendering vehicles inspected.

**D.4.1. Strategy:** Inspect every rendering vehicle for leakage and proper covering.

*Output:* Number of rendering vehicles inspected.

*Efficiencies:* Collection of annual registration fee for 100% of rendering vehicles.

*Explanatory:* Protects the environment and roadways from hazardous animal and poultry by-products causing possible damage to the environment and public.

**Goal E: Metrology Lab Division – Conduct calibrations and testing pursuant to the Mississippi Code of 1972 and MS Department of Agriculture and Commerce Regulations in support thereof (Miss. Code Ann. Section 75-27-19)**

**Objective E.1.** Annually calibrate and test all volume test measures, weights and weight kits used by the divisions in Regulatory, that are being used to test all weighing and measuring devices used in commerce, to ensure equity in the marketplace.

*Outcome:* All volume test measures; weights and weight kits will meet the accuracy required.

**E.1.1 Strategy:** Work with all Regulatory Division to ensure that the volume test measures, weights and weight kits are calibrated in a timely manner.

*Output:* Number volume test measures, weights and weight kits in inventory.

*Efficiency:* Average cost per calibration.

*Explanatory:* The output varies based on external factors such as weather conditions, inspectors schedule and lab schedule.

**Objective E.2.** Calibrate and test all volume test measures, weights and weight kits presented by the service companies, to ensure equity in the marketplace.

*Outcome:* All volume test measures, weights and weight kits used by industry will meet the standards required.

**B.2.1 Strategy:** Work with service companies that present their volume test measures, weights and weight kits to calibrate.

*Output:* Number of service company's volume test measures, weights and weight kits received.

*Efficiency:* Average cost per calibration.

*Explanatory:* The output varies based on external factors such as weather conditions, service companies schedule and lab schedule.

**Objective E.3.** Maintain the Metrology Lab accreditation, to ensure equity in the marketplace.

*Outcome:* Metrology Lab accreditation success means less down time for the Regulatory Division.

**E.3.1 Strategy:** Work with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to maintain the labs accreditation.

*Output:* Provide annual submission to NIST.

*Efficiency:* Complete necessary training.

*Explanatory:* The Regulatory Division and service companies rely on the Metrology Lab's accreditation to save time and money.

**Goal F: Produce Safety Division - Serve Mississippi farms that grow, pack, hold, and/or harvest produce and engage integral partners across the state to ensure growers are educated, supported, and have the necessary tools to achieve compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule. (Miss. Code Ann. Section 69-1-56)**

**Objective F.1.** Develop and administer a produce safety inspection and education program that is at least equal to the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule Inspection Program.

*Outcome:* The Produce Safety Division is at least equal to the FDA Produce Safety Rule Requirements.

**F.1.1. Strategy:** Maintain a well-trained staff.

*Output:* 100% new hire attendance of inspection methods training and 100% completion of yearly required FDA training by all employees.

*Efficiency:* Maintains experts in the field.

*Explanatory:* Promotes consumer confidence. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

**Objective F.2.** Ensure all produce growers are properly educated on the mandatory requirements outlined in the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule.

*Outcome:* All identified produce growers can effectively comply with the FSMA Produce Safety Rule regulations.

**F.2.1 Strategy:** Establish and maintain partnerships with Mississippi State University Extension Services and Alcorn State University School for Agriculture and Applied Sciences.

*Output:* 100% completion of agreed upon sub-award requirements.

*Efficiency:* Increased number of produce growers with education of the Produce Safety Rule across the state of Mississippi.

*Explanatory:* Expands the education and outreach efforts of the Produce Safety Division

**F.2.2 Strategy:** Conduct On-Farm Readiness Reviews requested by qualifying produce growers.

*Output:* 100% of requested On-Farm Readiness Reviews

*Efficiency:* Improved grower confidence in the implementation of the Produce Safety Rule.

*Explanatory:* The output varies upon the amount of On-Farm Readiness Reviews requested by the produce growers in Mississippi. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

**Objective F.3.** Enforce the mandatory rules and regulations of the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule

*Outcome:* Protect the health and welfare of consumers.

**F.3.1 Strategy:** Provide required inspections to all produce farms

*Output:* Inspector performs 100% of applicable inspections and follow-up inspections on

each farm to ensure compliance with the Produce Safety Rule.

*Efficiency:* Meets FDA Produce Safety Rule criteria.

*Explanatory:* Provides safer and more wholesome produce for consumers. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

**Goal G: Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Division- To provide fruit and vegetable growers, packers, wholesalers, and storage facilities inspection services** (*Miss Code Ann. Section 69-1-19*)

**Objective G.1.** The Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Division shall ensure the program operates in accordance with the federal agencies Branch Internal Quality Management System's (BIQMS) Quality System standards per agreement.

*Outcome:* The Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Division operates under an approved Program.

*Outcome:* An accredited state program.

**G.1.1. Strategy:** Maintain a well-trained staff.

*Output:* 100% of all new hire attendance of inspection methods training and 100% of Yearly required USDA training by all employees.

*Efficiency:* Maintains experts in the field.

*Explanatory:* Promotes Industry confidence. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

**Objective G.2.** Enforce rules and regulations regarding all Farmer Stock Peanut inspections at all Licensed Peanut Buying Points.

*Outcome:* Ensures that all peanuts inspected are issued the appropriate grade.

*Efficiency:* Meets all USDA criteria.

*Explanatory:* Provides growers with an un-biased inspection ensuring proper payment according to USDA grade issued. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

**Objective G.3.** Provide growers, packers, wholesalers, storage facilities USDA GAP/GHP Food Safety Audits.

**G.3.1. Strategy:** Audit all operations that request USDA GAP/GHP services.

*Efficiency:* 100% of all audits requested are completed and certified.

*Explanatory:* Provides auditees with a USDA certificate to promote their product.

**G.3.2. Strategy:** Provide un-announced USDA GAP/GHP audits to participants.

*Efficiency:* 100% of all auditees are required, and unannounced audits are completed monthly.

*Explanatory:* Ensures that all auditees operate in accordance with the rules and regulations on a day-to-day basis. Program integrity is contingent upon funding.

<b>Program 4: Marketing</b>
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**Goal A: Market Development – Encourage and create economic development opportunities for Mississippi's agricultural industry.** (*Miss. Code Ann. Section 69-45-3*)

**Objective A.1.** To coordinate well-balanced and innovative programs and activities that will expand and explore new domestic and export markets for Mississippi agricultural products and enterprises.

*Outcome:* Percent of agricultural community assisted through marketing initiatives based on funding availability (both state and federal).

*Outcome:* Percent increase of value-added companies of agricultural commodities assisted.

**A.1.1 Strategy:** Implement an array of programs that provide technical assistance, financial assistance, educational opportunities, and/or promotional opportunities to agricultural producers and businesses.

*Output:* Number of agricultural enterprises assisted.

*Efficiency:* Cost per agricultural enterprise assisted.

*Explanatory:* MDAC relies on both state and federal funding to develop promotional and educational materials. Although MDAC will continue to request marketing funds, the amount of funding will affect the number of materials created and distributed which can impact the number of people reached through agricultural awareness, education, programs, and promotion.

**A.1.2 Strategy:** Provide outreach to agricultural producers and agricultural enterprises to create awareness of program availability.

*Output:* Number of tradeshow/conventions/workshops/events that the Division participates in and/or implements.

*Efficiency:* Cost of tradeshow/workshops/events/conventions that the Division participates in and/or implements.

*Explanatory:* MDAC relies on both state and federal funding to develop promotional and educational materials. Although MDAC will continue to request marketing funds, the amount of funding will affect the number of materials created and distributed which can impact the number of people reached through agricultural awareness, education, programs, and promotion.

**Objective A.2.** Increase consumer awareness of agriculture and agricultural products grown, raised, and produced in Mississippi.

*Outcome:* Percentage increase of people reached by marketing means.

**A.2.1 Strategy:** Implement programs and activities to familiarize the consumer public with Mississippi's agriculture products.

*Output:* Number of persons reached by marketing means.

*Efficiency:* Cost per person reached through awareness.

*Explanatory:* MDAC relies on both state and federal funding to develop promotional and educational materials. Although MDAC will continue to request marketing funds, the amount of funding will affect the number of materials created and distributed which can impact the number of people reached through agricultural awareness, education, programs, and promotion.

**A.2.2 Strategy:** Promote and advertise Mississippi's agricultural industry, products, and enterprises.

*Output:* Number reached through agricultural awareness.

*Output:* Number of tradeshow/conventions/workshops/events that the Division participates in.

*Efficiency:* Cost of tradeshow/workshops/events/conventions that the Division participates in and/or implements.

*Explanatory:* MDAC relies on both state and federal funding to develop promotional and educational materials. Although MDAC will continue to request marketing funds, the amount of funding will affect the number of materials created and distributed which can impact the number of people reached through agricultural awareness, education, programs, and promotion.

**A.2.3 Strategy:** Create and distribute promotional and educational materials and items to be made readily available to the public through necessary means.

*Output:* Number reached through agricultural awareness.

*Efficiency:* Cost per person reached through awareness.

*Explanatory:* MDAC relies on both state and federal funding to develop promotional and educational materials. Although MDAC will continue to request marketing funds, the amount of funding will affect the number of materials created and distributed which can

impact the number of people reached through agricultural awareness, education, programs, and promotion.

**Goal B: Timber Market Development and Promotion – Encourage and create economic development opportunities for Mississippi’s timber industry.** (*Miss. Code Ann. Section 69-1-13(n)*)

**Objective A.1.** To coordinate opportunities for timber markets domestically and internationally that will expand and explore new domestic and export markets for Mississippi timber products and enterprises.

*Outcome:* Percentage of opportunities coordinated for timber businesses. 100% of what is done is focused on our strategy to coordinate opportunities for Timber Businesses

**A.1.1. Strategy:** Increase strategic partnerships with business, non-profit, and governmental organizations.

*Output:* Number of partnerships entered aside from: SUSTA, Mississippi Lumber Association, Mississippi Forestry Association, Inland, Rivers, Ports, and Terminals, Mississippi Loggers Associations, Countless Support Letters for funding of Rail, Port, Roadway, waterway, infrastructure projects; USM Research Project; MDOT Freight Plan Advisory Committee

*Efficiency:* Expand visibility of Mississippi timber industry domestically and internationally and virtually.

*Explanatory:* MDAC Timber program has had a successful inbound trade Missions hosting buyers from: India, China, Vietnam, Spain, Poland, Great Britain, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic.

Virtual expansion has allowed the creation of a data driven website that is interactive with maps, forestry information, stats from reputable sources that are widely praised by foresters, elected officials, economic developers, ports, rail, and transportation, as well as forestry economists. It is the first of its kind from a state agency to tell the story of Mississippi Timber and Forestry Industry.

- Timber Web site <https://timber.mdac.ms.gov/>

Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2023, we had website hits from 48 countries by 2,708 people with a 52.4% engagement rate.

Jan 1 – July 9, 2024, we had website hits from 34 countries by 1,365 people with a 55.63% engagement rate.

- International Activities: By partnering with the Southern United States Association (SUSTA), MDAC staff have studied and provided research based Unified Export Strategy (UES) for inbound Mississippi Wood Trade Missions. Bringing qualified buyers to the state allows them to see firsthand our vast timber resources, as well as tour sawmills, logging operation, and B2B Meetings for the purchase of our timber products.

Based on SUSTA Survey’s completed by the buyers, Mississippi has sold approximately \$12million as a direct result of the inbound missions. This does not include additional sales from buyers who have returned to meet with industry leaders and who made additional purchases.

MDAC staff has worked closely with MDA International Trade to invite delegations to our office to discuss timber and agriculture. A key to the success of partnering with MDA was Mississippi being selected and considered for the first time to participate in the Taiwan Good Will Trade Mission; over \$2Billion in sales were agreed upon via signed Letters of Intent, (LOI) between Taiwan, Mississippi, and 2 other States selling Soybeans and Corn to Taiwan. Taiwan hosted Mississippi and we invited Enviva as a participant for selling wood pellets.

- Domestic Activities: MDAC Timber staff met with every port director in the state; Mississippi River, Tombigbee Waterway, Gulf Coast Ports, as we hosted the Mississippi Port Commission. MDAC was able to provide data on the amount of wood being shipped from Mississippi globally. Since that time, the Port of Pascagoula has grown their timber exports, and the Port Director Bo Etheridge has joined us in B2B meetings with private industry to provide services to export timber.

MDAC Timber staff was able to assist in coordinating the Cold Storage vendors and support for Gulfport and met with the Port of Theodore in Alabama as they are equipped with infrastructure to ship globally wood residual products in bulk.

## Program 5. Administration

### Goal A: Maintain administration costs at 24% of the total budget

**Objective A.1:** Implement and provide the most cost-efficient methods of maintaining overall agency administrative costs.

*Outcome:* Maintain Administration cost at 24% of total budget.

*Efficiency:* Good stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

**A.1 Strategy:** Utilize the most current technology for providing services while taking advantage of contract pricing when applicable.

*Output:* Provide administrative services for all employees and the public.

*Efficiency:* Utilize the most cost-effective methods for providing services.

## Program 6. Livestock Theft

### Goal A: To protect the investments of the agricultural community in the State of Mississippi while upholding the laws set forth. (*Miss Code Ann. 69-29-1, et al.*)

**Objective A.1:** To employ twelve investigators, one for each of the nine districts and one for the Northern, Central, and Southern Regions of the Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau, to respond efficiently when related cases are established, and to put forth the utmost effort to resolve open cases.

*Outcome:* Number of cases cleared.

*Outcome:* Percentage of cases prosecuted.

**A1.1 Strategy:** To provide the necessary training and equipment to each of the nine investigators to assist them in their duties.

*Output:* Number of cases investigated.

*Efficiency:* Utilize support and resources from other local law enforcement to assist in case outcomes.

## Program 7: Farmers Market

### Goal A: The goal of Farmers Central Market is to provide facilities for the efficient handling of farm products in the interest of the farmers, the consumer, the public, and the State of Mississippi. (*Miss. Code 69-7-101*)

**Objective A.1** To obtain and retain full time occupancy of farmers stalls (retail spaces) and other rental spaces (wholesale spaces).

*Outcome:* Percent of retail spaces rented based on seasonal availability of produce.

*Outcome:* Percent of wholesale spaces rented.

**A.1.1 Strategy:** Promote the Farmers Market through advertising, social media, outreach, and events to consumers and farmers to create a greater awareness of the Market and its offerings.

*Output:* Number of retail spaces rented (booth) (average per week).  
*Output:* Number of wholesale spaces rented (booths).  
*Output:* Number of certified growers.  
*Output:* Amount of revenue generated through rental space rented.  
*Efficiency:* Average revenue per retail space rented (per day).  
*Efficiency:* Average revenue per wholesale space rented (month).  
*Explanatory:* An external factor that could have an impact on the number of farmers selling at the Market during a given year is the potential for crop failure due to weather conditions. Weather conditions (rain, drought, freezes) could hurt crops regionally, which could determine the number of farmers participating, as well as the number of crops that are available for purchase.

## **Program 8: Seed Testing Lab**

**Goal A: Ensure seed sold for planting purposes meets seed label guarantees and quality standards.**

*(Mississippi Pure Seed Law of 1968, Sections 69-3-1 through 69-3-29)*

**Objective A.1** Protect and support seed companies and consumers by providing unbiased and reliable seed testing to determine truth-in-labeling.

*Outcome:* Percent of seed tested in compliance.

**A.1.1 Strategy:** Inspect and sample the manufacturing sites and retail outlets where products are produced or distributed to ensure label guarantees.

*Output:* Number of tests performed.

*Output:* Number of official samples collected.

*Efficiency:* Number of days to run cool test.

*Efficiency:* Number of days for Germination test (average depending on type of seed).

*Efficiency:* Number of hours to evaluate TZ test.

*Explanatory:* Employee retention impacts efficiency and productivity.

**Objective A.2** Administer the Mississippi Certified Seed Program for the Mississippi Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) to provide unbiased seed testing.

*Outcome:* Percent of seed submitted that meet MCIA's standards.

**A.2.1 Strategy:** Sample seed submitted by MCIA.

*Output:* Number of seed samples tested for MCIA.

*Efficiency:* Average time to evaluate official samples.

*Explanatory:* Employee retention impacts efficiency and productivity.

## **Program 9: Egg Marketing Board**

**Goal A: Increase the consumption of Mississippi eggs and public awareness for the egg industry** *(Egg*

*Marketing Board: Sections 69-7-251 through 69-7-277)*

**Objective A.1** Promote eggs through advertisements on the radio, television, print media, point of sale demonstrations, brochures, and other promotional activities.

*Outcome:* Number of people reached.

**A.1.1 Strategy:** Research and sample media outlets and outreach avenues in which to reach targeted audience for maximum awareness.

*Output:* Percent increase in the number of eggs purchased.

*Efficiency:* Cost of outreach in relation to consumers reached.

*Efficiency:* Percentage of budget dedicated to advertising.

## **Program 10: Mississippi State Fairgrounds**

### **Goal A: Maintain and increase revenue, generally**

**Objective A.1:** Increase revenue to offset rising costs relevant to event and infrastructure upkeep and improvements. Maintain and increase number of event days per year.

*Outcome:* Change in baseline revenue to maintain and increase sustainability.

**A.1.1. Strategy:** Assess and analyze all rental agreements and operational efficiencies; make needed adjustments to meet essential requirements.

*Output:* Revenue increase over a period by increasing event days. *Explanatory:*

Increases in the cost of doing business must be met along with keeping infrastructure competitive with like facilities.

*Efficiencies:* Increase rental rates for each facility combined with increased number of event days per year.

### **Goal B: Maintain and increase revenue, Dixie National Rodeo**

**Objective B.1:** Increase livestock entries, rodeo attendance, and overall total attendance.

*Outcome:* Change in baseline revenue to main and increase sustainability; offset rising costs.

**B.1.1. Strategy:** Assess and analyze all livestock entry fees and all competitors' entrance fees and operational efficiencies. Make needed adjustments to meet essential requirements to attract bigger and better events.

*Output:* Revenue increase over a period by modifying ticket prices, increasing rental rates, vendor agreements, and event days per year.

*Explanatory:* Increase in the cost of doing business must be met along with keeping infrastructure competitive with like facilities.

### **Goal C: Increase youth and livestock show participation and funding**

**Objective C.1:** Increase current revenue from existing sources that is provided to Mississippi youth participants

*Outcome:* Increase premiums paid to show winners

**C.1.1. Strategy:** Work in conjunction with the Mississippi State Extension Service, the FFA organization, and 4-H groups to petition the legislature for additional funding.

*Output:* Competitive increase of funds to show winners

*Explanatory:* Show winnings have been stagnant for over 15 years and the cost to enter this worthwhile educational avenue of livestock showing has drastically increased.

## **Program 11: Wild Hog Control Program**

**Goal A:** Limit the amount of damage to row crops, pastures, forests, and natural resources caused by wild hogs on private agricultural and forestry lands in Mississippi.

**Objective A.1:** Trap and remove wild hogs from private lands.

*Outcome:* Limited and/or decreased damage caused by wild hogs.

**A.1.1 Strategy:** Trap Loan Program – provide the most effective wild hog trapping equipment and technical guidance to private land managers through annual application periods.

*Output:* Number of wild hogs captured and removed from private lands.

*Explanatory:* The Wild Hog Control Program, created in 2020, requires a statewide program administrator and two regional field staff. The programmatic goal is to capture and remove at least 1,000 wild hogs from private lands annually. Success and efficiency are dependent upon funding, demand by landowners, and the level/quality of effort provided by landowners during trapping activities.



<b>Program 12: Agriculture Workforce Education, Outreach and Development</b>
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**Goal A: Increase the number of students exposed to agricultural industry-based workforce training needs.**

**Objective A.1:** Market and raise awareness, through various means, of the many economic opportunities available within agriculture.

*Outcome:* Increase the number of students exposed to agricultural careers.

**A.1 Strategy:** Continue to raise awareness through MDAC youth engagement programs, social media activities, and other various outreach programs.

*Output:* Increase in number of youths engaged.

*Explanatory:* Information penetration has proven to be the most difficult challenge to overcome.

**Goal B: Increase involvement in the Mississippi agriculture workforce via Department outreach and development.**

**Objective B.1;** Connect adults, secondary students, and post-secondary students to agriculture career and educational opportunities.

*Outcome:* Increase participation in Mississippi's agriculture workforce.

**B.1.1 Strategy:** Engage directly with Mississippi community colleges, in conjunction with AccelerateMS, regarding the specific needs of each workforce ecosystem as outlined by AccelerateMS.

*Output:* Quantifiable lists of each workforce ecosystem's agriculture workforce needs.

*Explanatory:* This will serve to guide MDAC efforts to market agricultural workforce opportunities by region.

**B.1.2 Strategy:** Engage public and private partners to match interested parties with workforce opportunities.

*Output:* Increase number of job seekers finding job opportunities within Mississippi agriculture.

*Output:* Increase in number of partners.

*Efficiency:* MDAC's strong connections to both public and private entities.

**B.1.3 Strategy:** Continue to implement the MDAC Internship Program.

*Output:* Directly hire college-aged students and provide real-world experience across various agricultural subjects.

*Efficiency:* MDAC's strong connections to students with agricultural trajectories.