



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE – BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY**  
LESTER SPELL, JR., D.V.M., COMMISSIONER  
BUTCH ALPE, DIRECTOR

**PRESS RELEASE-**  
**For Immediate Release**

**November 20, 2008**

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**MS Department of Agriculture Offers Assistance to Beginning Beekeepers**

Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture, Lester Spell, announced today that financial assistance will be made available to eligible beginning beekeepers who establish up to four colonies of honey bees in an effort to reverse the recent decline of honey bee populations in Mississippi.

“The decline in populations of honey bees needed for pollination of crops and home gardens has necessitated a program to assist people interested in becoming first-time beekeepers,” Spell said.

By showing proof of purchase for two hives, a new beekeeper may receive a reimbursement of up to \$180 for one of the two hives and bees. Qualifying applicants can receive a maximum reimbursement of \$360; however, limited amount of funding is available. Attendance at workshops, recordkeeping requirements, and other restrictions apply.

The program is administered through the Mississippi Beekeepers Association and is being funded through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Applicants must apply by April 1, 2009, by contacting Harry Fulton, State Entomologist, at (662) 325-3390; toll free at 1-888-257-1285, or by email at [harry@mdac.state.ms.us](mailto:harry@mdac.state.ms.us).