



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

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**Mississippi Department of Agriculture Takes Important Step in
Invasive Weed Prevention**

Commissioner of Agriculture, Lester Spell, has announced a new cooperative initiative to fight against invasive weeds in the State of Mississippi. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) is spearheading a statewide Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) that will help prevent the infestation and spread of invasive and noxious weeds across Mississippi. The inaugural meeting of the CWMA was hosted by MDAC at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum in Jackson on Tuesday, October 14, 2008.

The CWMA will partner federal, state, and local governmental and private programs to pool resources, share knowledge, and coordinate efforts to combat invasive and noxious weeds that disrupt agriculture and damage the eco-systems of the state.

“The formation of this cooperative program will give us an important opportunity to become more effective in managing invasive species that threaten our state,” said Spell.

Information presented at the meeting included the positive impacts of the CWMA on the future of noxious weed management and preservation of Mississippi’s natural eco-systems and agriculture. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed by 22 representatives of the cooperating organizations to establish this proactive, comprehensive, and cohesive approach for public education, research, and control efforts of recognized noxious weeds in the state.

“We are all here willing to serve,” said Spell. “With a truly organized effort, we will be able to better utilize the knowledge and resources available, making us stronger representatives of Mississippi landowners.”

The Mississippi Legislature, in the 2008 Session, designated BPI to be the lead agency of the statewide CWMA. For more information, contact BPI at (662) 325-3390 or toll free at (888) 257-1285.