

from the **DIRECTOR**



If you've ever driven from Corinth on the Tennessee line to Bay St. Louis on the Gulf of Mexico, you know that our state is very diverse.

The diversity goes beyond the obvious—the rich soils and flat landscape of the Delta; the rolling, pine-covered hills of the northern coun-

ties; and the sandy beaches and shrimp-filled waters of the Gulf. Below the surface, there are 700 named soils in Mississippi and the state's vegetation grows in four different climate zones.

For more than a century, the research conducted by scientists with the agricultural and forestry experiment station has supported the agricultural and other enterprises that fill the state's landscape. Mississippi's first station was established on the Starkville campus of what was then the Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1888. Off-campus research began in 1900 at a branch station in McNeill in Pearl River County.

Today, the entire state is truly our laboratory; with MAFES research facilities at 17 locations and on-farm projects with cooperating private producers throughout the state.

Each year, many of the branches host field days, providing the public the chance to see our work firsthand. This issue of MAFES Research Highlights features our branches and their field days. We hope you've had an opportunity to visit one of these events. If not, the following pages will provide a glimpse of the people and activities that make up our statewide lab.

Vance H. Watson

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Director

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