

from the DIRECTOR



Summer and fall are busy times at MAFES facilities across the state, with research plot work in full swing during the growing season, followed by harvest activities. The summer and fall months also are when the staffs of the various research and extension centers and branch sta-

tions invite the public to come see their work and to visit with MAFES scientists and Extension personnel.

This issue of Highlights contains reports on several of this year's field days. More will be covered in the winter 2004 issue.

There's also a story in this issue about a type of research project that's gaining importance for Mississippi and the rest of the nation. MAFES agricultural engineers are working with colleagues in MSU's Swalm School of Chemical Engineering to efficiently produce chemicals such as ethanol and acetate from cotton gin waste, rice husks, sawdust and other agricultural products and byproducts.

A Biomax gasifier, one of only six such units in the world, was recently installed on the Starkville campus for use in the project. The state-of-the-art equipment and the expertise of the scientists involved have positioned Mississippi State as a leader in gasification research. This could play an important role in helping reduce the nation's dependence on imported oil.

This is just one example of how MAFES research is helping Mississippi agriculture and industry play new and important roles for the state and nation.

Vance H. Watson

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MAFES RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

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