



DEPARTMENT

of Agricultural Economics:
Market Opportunities and Business Management

A focus of research in the Department of Agricultural Economics is marketing issues related to Mississippi crops.

A current project involves research into the markets for fee-access hunting and recreational activities. The project includes an analysis of the market value of hunting/fishing-based amenities, such as provision of lodging, food, guides, etc., to determine whether the added revenues generated by these services is sufficient to offset the costs. The project also includes an analysis of whether government programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program and Wetland Reserve Program can be used to lower the cost of providing wildlife habitat and fee-access hunting.

Another project by the agricultural economists is an analysis of the financial requirements and economic costs and benefits of generating electricity using methane produced from cow manure. The research is being conducted on a dairy farm in central Mississippi. The goal is to determine



Photos by Marco Nicovich

whether the electricity cost savings and revenues generated from the sale of excess electrical power will compensate the dairy farm for investments in facilities and equipment used in generating electricity. The results of the study will provide valuable information for livestock producers seeking to determine if generating power from animal waste will benefit them economically.

Personnel in the department also are researching whether advertising the health benefits and location of origin of sweet potatoes has a significant impact on consumer demand. The results of the research will help Mississippi sweet potato producers and packers with identifying significant target markets and marketing strategies.

Current research in the department also includes a USDA-supported project to conduct nationwide studies on ways to improve the federal crop insurance program and a study of the feasibility of a national aquaculture risk management program.