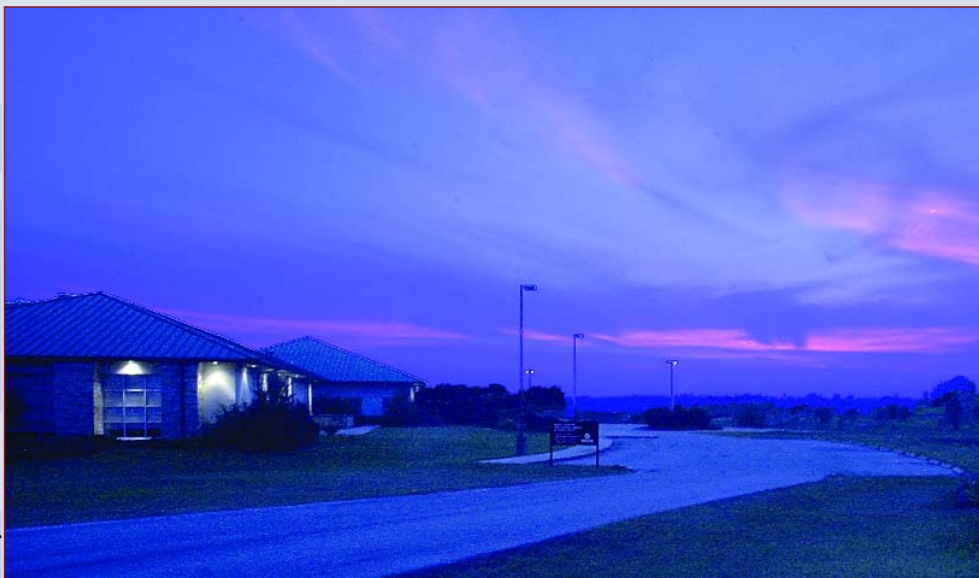


Hiram Palmertree North Mississippi Research and Extension Center



Jim Lytle

The North Mississippi Research and Extension Center serves a 21-county area from the center's headquarters in Lee County. The center is home to the state's oldest producer advisory group, which met for the 51st time in 2004. Four research locations are administered by the center: the Northeast Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Verona, the North Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Holly Springs, the Pontotoc Ridge-Flatwoods Branch Experiment Station in Pontotoc County, and the Prairie Research Unit in Monroe County.

Research in support of the area's major agronomic crops is conducted at the Northeast Mississippi Branch. Current research includes evaluation of herbicide- and insect-tolerant crops and the evaluation and development of conservation tillage systems for corn, cotton and soybeans, with the goals of minimizing soil sediment loss, enhancing yields and reducing production costs.

The center's Horticulture Unit also is located at the Northeast Mississippi Branch and conducts research with vegetables, flowers and other horticultural crops. A current project is studying the suitability of various types of flowers for commercial cut-flower production. Several varieties of sunflowers have been evaluated and found to have potential in the Mississippi environment and to be of acceptable quality for use by florists.

Projects with corn, cotton and soybeans are a major part of the work at the North Mississippi Branch, with an emphasis on cotton production for the hill section of the state. USDA/ARS soil and water research also is conducted at the branch. The current focus is on measuring minerals moving into groundwater from fertilizer applications and mineral loss from ground application of various levels of poultry litter.

Sweet potatoes are an important crop in Pontotoc and surrounding counties, and the work of the Pontotoc Ridge Flatwoods Branch includes a sweet potato breeding program and other research in support of the area's sweet potato industry. A current project is addressing the needs of the area's producers for pest management systems for controlling weeds and insect pests. Cotton, corn and soybean variety trials also are conducted at the branch, and a USDA/ARS project with poultry litter as a fertilizer source cotton is currently under way.

Livestock research is the primary focus of the Prairie Research Unit. Evaluation of new and promising forage crops is one phase of the work at the unit. In addition, a current study is measuring the effect of cattle stocking rate density on bacterial content of runoff water. The study is being conducted in six bermed paddocks covering a total of 4.1 acres in an established pasture of mixed common bermudagrass and fungus-infected fescue.



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For more about the work of the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center, visit msucare.com/nmrec/index.html.



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