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Marco Niconich

RESEARCH *outside the box*

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By Bob Ratliff

During its infancy in 1960s, catfish farming was considered an alternative crop. At that time, farmers in the Mississippi Delta would add a catfish pond or two to their operations that consisted primarily of cotton and other row crops.

Today, the Mississippi farm-raised catfish industry produces thousands of jobs and pumps millions of dollars into the state's economy each year.

Sweetpotatoes are another one-time alternative crop that have hit the mainstream for Mississippi farmers. Beginning as a sideline for a few growers in 1930, Mississippi today is the nation's third largest producer, with 86 commercial operations and about 14,000 acres in production.

Because of the success of these and other one-time alternative crops, MAFES supports research to help develop other crops with economic potential for Mississippi growers.

Finding new uses for crops that already are part of Mississippi's economic mainstream is another important part of MAFES research. The "value-added" research explores ways Mississippi products can be processed, packaged or marketed in ways that will allow them to reach new or broader markets.

Alternative Crops and Value-Added Products Projects for 2003

Project	Principal Investigator	Project	Principal Investigator
Evaluation and Production of Castor as an Oilseed Crop for Mississippi	Brian Baldwin	Alfalfa Development for Mississippi	Glover Triplett
Alternative Production Practices for Value-Added Watermelon in Mississippi	Christine Coker	Velvet Antler as a Nutraceutical: A Renewable Resource from the Deer Farming Industry	Scott Willard
Kenaf as a Viable and Valuable Alternative Crop in Mississippi	Eugene Columbus	Grass-Fed Beef: A Revitalization Tool to Southeastern Livestock Production	Byron Williams J. Herring Robert Rogers
Field Establishment of Medicinal Herbs and Potential for Commercial Production	Kent Cushman	Enhanced Quality and Value Addition: Development and Evaluation of Marination/ Injection Systems for Muscle Color Improvement	Byron Williams J. Herring Robert Rogers
Development and Comparison of Value-Added Food Products Made from Muscadine Grapes	Wanda Dodson Carey Sutphin Betty Ector	Development of Omega-3 Enriched Catfish Fillets with Dietary Fish Oil to Yield a Nutrient-Enhanced, Value-Added Food Product	Bruce Manning Menghe Li Edwin Robinson
Screening Vegetables for Industrial and Medicinal Production in Mississippi	William Evans	Cut Flower Poinsettia: An Alternative Use for a Traditional Commodity	Christine Coker Patricia Knight Ben Posadas
Value-Added Sweetpotato Products	Patti Coggins Rebecca Kelly	Organic Vegetable Crops in Mississippi: Yields and Economic Returns	William Evans Kenneth Hood John Black
Evaluation of Edible Flowers as a Potential Mississippi Crop	Patricia Knight Christine Coker Glenn Fain	Freshwater Shrimp Marketing and Planning Study	Terrill Hanson Jayson Lusk Darren Hudson
Poultry Litter as an Organic Means of Plant-Parasitic Nematode Management on Cotton	Gary Lawrence Yvonne Thaxton	Water Garden Plant Evaluation	Crofton Sloan
Alternative Use of Poultry Litter in Cotton Production	Mark Shankle		
Cut Flower Production in Mississippi	Crofton Sloan Christine Coker Kenneth Hood		

