

Vice President's Letter



"Are you involved in agriculture?"

Most Americans answer that question with a definite "no," until they're asked the follow-up question: "Do you eat?"

The truth is, more Americans than you might think are directly involved in agriculture. Although fewer and fewer people are needed to actually produce food and fiber, more and more are needed to process and market agricultural products, to produce and service the equipment and other inputs needed on the farm, and to provide other services needed by the nation's agricultural infrastructure.

At Mississippi State University, we are training the young men and women who will be the 21st century's leaders in all aspects of agriculture and its support industries. Students enrolled in the array of programs available in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are preparing for careers as agronomists, fashion designers, entomologists, dietitians, florists and agricultural economists, among others. Graduates of the College of Veterinary Medicine will work in a variety of animal health fields, and students in the College of Forest Resources prepare for careers ranging from conservation officers to professionals in all aspects of furniture manufacturing.

The Focus section of this issue of *Landmarks* reports on the organizations available to students in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. Participation in these organizations gives students opportunities to develop leadership skills, learn more about their chosen professions and establish contacts that will be important as they begin their careers.

At MSU, educational opportunities are not limited to students enrolled in the traditional academic programs and does not end at the borders of the Starkville campus. There are reports in this issue of *Landmarks* on several of the university's programs that provide services to individuals throughout the state, including the 4-H program's work with children of military families and the recreational and educational activities available at the university's Crosby Arboretum in south Mississippi.

The first priority of all of these programs, whether on campus, in the county MSU Extension Service offices or at the branch experiment stations located throughout the state, is meeting the needs of the people of Mississippi.

Vance H. Watson

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