

Vice President's Letter



In the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine we work from A to Z—from asparagus to zinnias. There are research projects, outreach programs or academic areas dealing with almost every crop grown in Mississippi.

Ours is a rapidly developing state, with new industry constantly coming online. Agriculture, however, remains Mississippi's number one industry, and our mission as a land grant university is to provide support for all aspects of that industry. The university's support extends from the forests that feed the furniture factories in the northern areas of the state to the fertile fields of the Delta to the cattle operations of the Blackbelt Prairie down to the Gulf's shrimp fleet.

There are 1,753 people in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State and at its facilities throughout the state. They work hard to provide academic programs, research, Extension and other outreach programs needed by all Mississippians, whether they are directly involved in production agriculture or dependent on the food, fiber and other resources provided by agriculture. Their mission, however, could not be accomplished without the support provided by outside sources.

A key to maintaining much-needed programs is the support provided each year by the Mississippi Legislature. The funding provided by the Legislature assures that basic programs continue, and having those programs in place provides leverage to seek federal and private support to provide additional services.

There's another type of support that is vital to our land grant mission—the support provided by the people of Mississippi. Volunteers in every county and community in the state help MSU Extension personnel, research scientists and others within the division make more effective use of resources. In some cases, such partnerships are what make research projects or educational programs possible.

The Focus section of this issue of *Landmarks* begins on page 16 and contains information on the partnerships that support the work of the division.

Those partnerships, combined with the dedication of university personnel, allow MSU to continue responding to the educational needs of people throughout the state.

Vance H. Watson

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