



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY,
AND VETERINARY MEDICINE



2025
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

DAFVM ADMINISTRATION



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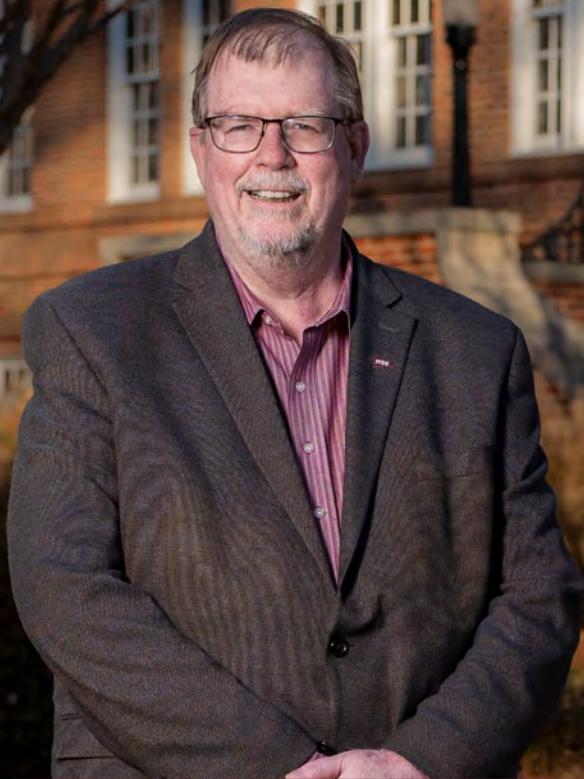
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MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION



WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear friends,

I am the first in my family to attend college instead of working on our dairy farm in south-central Missouri. My mother took a job at the post office, and I worked my way through school. Graduating from college meant more than just earning a degree; it opened my eyes to opportunities I didn't know existed. For me, college was worth the cost. In this report, you'll meet a recent graduate who says it was for him, too.

In 2025, MSU was named one of *Money* magazine's Best Colleges in America, based on quality of education, affordability, and student outcomes. Mississippi needs skilled workers to sustain its economic momentum, and our graduates, who find jobs soon after earning their degrees, have career success rates exceeding the national average. In 2024, our state ranked second in the nation for real GDP growth, and continuing that momentum depends on training people for the jobs our top industries require.

The farms of today look very different from the ones where I grew up. Modern agriculture requires a deep understanding of AI, automation, and advanced technology. Our division's mission is to serve our state through learning, research, and service—preparing our future workforce and solving challenges that our producers face.

Vision 2030 is our strategic plan, developed in partnership with producers and statewide organizations, to strengthen the future of agriculture and forestry. A study by MSU economists found that our state exports more than \$10B in raw agricultural and forestry products each year for processing in other states—shifting jobs, tax revenue, and long-term economic growth away from Mississippi. Vision 2030 brings attention to this challenge and begins an important statewide conversation about how Mississippi can better capture the value of what we grow and produce.

Our new Food and Agriculture as Competitive Statecraft Collaboratory addresses another critical truth: food security and national security are inseparable. MSU's leadership in agricultural research and reputation as a top military-friendly school uniquely position us to lead this conversation.

The work detailed in this report highlights our commitment to our land-grant roots and our mission to serve our state. Just as education changed my life's trajectory, the research, learning, and service led by our division are shaping the future of our state.

Thank you for your partnership in this important work.

KEITH COBLE
DAFVM Vice President

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

CALS

- 2,697 students
- 17 undergraduate degrees; 51 concentrations
- 18 graduate degrees; 40 concentrations
- 97% job placement rate
- CALS offers one of only six poultry science degree-granting programs in the country.

College of Forest Resources

CFR

- 634 students
- 4 undergraduate degrees; 16 concentrations
- 5 graduate degrees; 3 concentrations
- 97% job placement rate
- CFR offers the only nationally accredited forestry degree program in Mississippi.

College of Veterinary Medicine

CVM

- 465 Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students
- 66 veterinary medical technology students
- 391,550 clinical cases in 2025 at the Poultry Research and Diagnostic Lab, the Mississippi Veterinary Research and Diagnostic Lab, and the Animal Health Center
- CVM's Center for Rural Veterinary Practice trains the rural veterinary workforce.
- Nationally recognized CVM research promotes animal health, disease prevention, and antimicrobial stewardship.

\$1.7B annual economic impact generated by the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine

Source: Mississippi State University 2024 Economic Impact Study, conducted by the National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center

DAFVM *Fast Facts*

Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station

MAFES

- Ranked No. 14 nationally in agricultural research.
- Partners with MSUES to deliver services at four regional Research and Extension Centers.
- Performs research at 16 branch stations across the state.
- Leveraged \$43M in external funding for Mississippi in 2025 — stretching state investment through federal and private partnerships.
- Secured 260 research projects benefiting Mississippi's agriculture and economy.

Forest and Wildlife Research Center

FWRC

- Ranked No. 10 nationally in natural resources and conservation research.
- Serves as the research arm of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks.
- Operates the MSU Deer Ecology and Management Laboratory.
- Manages nearly 24K acres of forestland for research, teaching, and outreach.
- Maintains more than 32K acres in the Bulldog Forest, MSU Foundation land holdings for the benefit of university programs.

MSU Extension Service

MSUES

- Staffs offices in all 82 counties.
- Provides education and service in four program areas: 4-H youth development, agriculture and natural resources, government and community development, and family, health, and wellness.
- Offers workforce development and training in all four program areas.
- Partners with MAFES to deliver services at four regional Research and Extension Centers.
- Delivered 2M direct services to Mississippians in 2025, including 90K Mississippi 4-H'ers.

CVM to Become
**World
Authority**
on **Equine
Laminitis**

TRANSFORMATIVE GIFT ESTABLISHES **RESEARCH CENTER**

One of the most serious conditions affecting horses is laminitis, a debilitating and painful hoof disease that can lead to euthanasia. A generous gift from Nancy Link to CVM established the Nancy Fair Link Laminitis Research Center, the only facility of its kind in the region dedicated to solving this problem.

“The connections that develop between horses and their people are deeply personal. Suffering along with them through laminitis is extremely painful,” Link said. “My heartbreaking experience with it led me to devote a large amount of my resources toward efforts to eradicate the disease. Even if a cure is not found, I wanted to try to make a big dent in the effort.”

This investment will not only construct a new facility, but it also positions MSU as a hub for breakthrough equine health research. CVM has recruited top veterinarians and research scientists to develop unmatched faculty expertise in the region. The new research center will feature five dedicated research workbenches, advanced microscopy and imaging suites, and a 24-horse research barn.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Nancy Fair Link Laminitis Research Center was held November 10. Construction is scheduled to be complete in 2027.



Nancy Fair Link Laminitis Research Center



Laminitis Barn





DRIVING **MISSISSIPPI'S** ECONOMY

MAFES and MSUES: Essential Partners for Row Crop Producers

Mississippi's row crop producers face difficult market conditions that threaten profitability. MAFES and MSUES provide farmers critical support through one-on-one communication and programs like the annual Row Crop Short Course to help them stay competitive. Producers who attended in 2024 reported an expected \$17M in earnings from applying research-based strategies for growing soybeans, cotton, corn, rice, and peanuts.



MAFES: Keeping Dollars in Our State

Mississippi producers currently send seafood samples out of state for testing. The new MAFES Northern Gulf Aquatic Food Research Center’s laboratory will keep that work in Mississippi by expediting results, reducing costs, and supporting our coastal economy. Because the seafood industry annually contributes more than \$300M to the state’s economy, this lab meets a critical need for one of Mississippi’s largest industries. Funding for phases two and three is needed to add processing capabilities and business incubator space.

Poultry: Mississippi’s Largest Ag Industry at \$3.8B

CVM’s Poultry Research and Diagnostic Lab performed nearly 300K tests in FY25 to provide critical disease detection and prevention services to protect Mississippi’s poultry industry. CVM veterinarians and MSUES biosecurity education specialists serve more than 1K broiler producers statewide to safeguard the jobs and economic activity generated by our state’s largest agricultural sector.

Forestry: \$19.09B Industry, 84K Jobs

Scientists in FWRC drive innovation in forestry—Mississippi’s second-largest industry. Research investments translate to sustainable forest management, new products, and stronger markets—protecting \$4.42B in income for Mississippi families.

Food Science: Adding Value to Local Crops

MAFES's food science programs are driving economic growth by creating value-added products from Mississippi crops and supporting the state's food industry. Our scientists are developing new products from blueberries and sweet potatoes—\$197M in combined industry value—including new ice cream flavors and sweet potato powders, flours, and protein bars. The new MAFES Food Science Innovation Hub partners with meat and poultry companies to improve shelf life, increase product yields, and optimize ingredient formulations. The Hub also conducts sensory and shelf-life testing for food companies.



“

One of the best ways to teach responsibility to children is for them to have an animal to care for. We really believe in Extension for delivering this kind of teaching and for leading 4-H. What better way to bring people together than having a facility, a place where people can gather, learn, exercise, and just enjoy each other? The Ag-Ed Center is going to be the nucleus to bring our community together.

–*Lee Caldwell*

DESOTO COUNTY
Board of Supervisors President

”



In June 2025, DeSoto County opened its \$19M Agri-Education Center, featuring a 2,000-seat arena, classrooms, and 200 acres dedicated to agricultural education.



This innovative facility supports Mississippi’s leading industry through hands-on learning, 4-H programs, and MSU Extension services, and the center is a model for agricultural education statewide. U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith attended the grand opening and said she would like to see the concept duplicated “81 more times.”



RANKED 14th

By the National Science
Foundation in Agriculture
and Natural Resources and
Conservation Research



MSU leads the nation in agricultural autonomy and operates the country's largest fleet of university-owned, American-made spray drones. Our research and training are setting the standard for safe, effective adoption of this technology.

BUILDING **MISSISSIPPI'S** WORKFORCE



Securing the Future of Mississippi's Top Commodity

The CALS Department of Poultry Science is one of only six poultry science degree-granting programs in the U.S. CVM houses one of just eight poultry residency programs in the nation approved by the American College of Poultry Veterinarians. Year after year, poultry is the top agricultural commodity in Mississippi, and we are training the industry leaders of tomorrow.



Training the Veterinarians Mississippi Needs

Mississippi faces a critical shortage of rural veterinarians. CVM's Center for Rural Veterinary Practice and the Dr. Mac Huddleston Rural Veterinary Scholarship, established by the Mississippi Legislature in 2024, are addressing this shortage. Our highly competitive program gives students two full years of hands-on clinical experience and 60-plus solo surgeries before graduation—far exceeding national standards. Graduates consistently score above national averages and are prepared to serve Mississippi's animal health needs.

Becoming a Leader in Cross-Laminated Timber Building and Design

The Mississippi Lumber Manufacturers Association Endowed Professorship in Innovative Wood Construction and Design is a pivotal investment preparing future architects and construction professionals to lead in the field of cross-laminated timber. This sustainable building material continues gaining traction as an affordable alternative to concrete and steel. This investment positions Mississippi as a national leader in sustainable construction while strengthening the market for the forestry sector.

Growing 4-H to Include 90K Youth

In 2025, Mississippi 4-H added more than 20K young people to the youth development program, delivered by MSUES. From livestock showing and shooting sports to robotics and leadership development, 90K Mississippi children and teens are learning the skills they'll need to become successful future leaders.

Meeting Industry Demand with New Academic Programs

- New food science concentrations added within CALS departments—animal and dairy sciences, biochemistry, horticulture, and poultry science—preparing students for careers in food safety, processing, and innovation.
- New public policy concentration in biochemistry connecting science and decision-making to support Mississippi agriculture and industry.
- New Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science in Agricultural Systems adding to degrees available from the landscape architecture department.
- New concentrations in landscape contracting and management with emphasis on business and ecosystem management.



THE COLLEGE ADVANTAGE

MSU Makes *Best Colleges* in *America* List

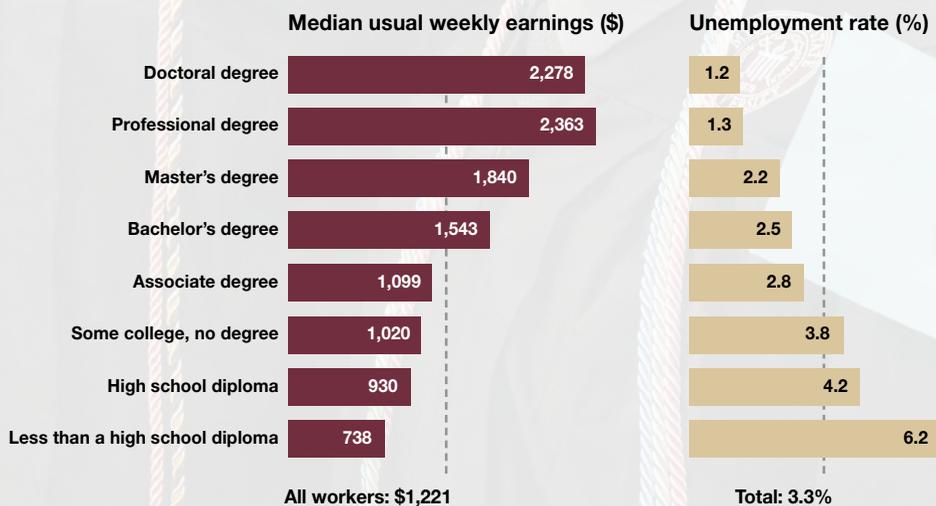
MSU was named one of the 2025 Best Colleges in America by Money magazine, based on education quality, affordability, and student outcomes.

The Value of a College Education

College graduates earn significantly more and face lower unemployment rates than people without degrees. MSU graduates exemplify these outcomes—97% are employed, in graduate school, or serving in the military within six months of graduation, exceeding the national average.

The return on investment is clear: Bachelor's degree holders earn nearly double what high school graduates make weekly, while advanced degree holders earn even more. For Mississippi's economy, MSU graduates are positioned to fill jobs and contribute to our state's top industries.

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2024



Note: Data are 2024 annual averages for persons aged 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.



The MSU Poultry Science Department has a 100% job placement rate for graduating seniors, and after meeting the people in that department, I knew it was where I wanted to be. Those people became my second family, and they still are today. MSU isn't just educating the next generation—they're developing the skilled workforce that Mississippi's poultry industry depends on to remain competitive and grow.

—Ryn Laster, Ph.D.

CAL-MAINE FOODS
Director of Food Safety and Animal Welfare

Meeting Industry Needs

MSU's combination of academic quality, affordability, and career preparation makes it an essential investment in Mississippi's economic future—producing graduates who stay, work, and lead in our state.

Real-World Success

Jesse Newton designs apparel and manages factory partnerships and online sales for Mossy Oak, one of America's most recognizable outdoor lifestyle brands with roots in West Point, Mississippi. Jesse credits his bachelor's degree from CALS in fashion design and merchandising for launching his career in New York's fashion industry. His love for family and MSU brought him back to Mississippi, where he worked his way through graduate school and earned his master's in fashion design and product development before landing his leadership role at a Mississippi company.

I knew that a master's degree would help open doors that might not be available with just an undergraduate degree. In a specialized field like this, there was so much to learn. MSU taught me how the apparel life cycle works and prepared me for the workplace in ways that made me confident and ready for my career.

—Jesse Newton

MOSSY OAK
Apparel Designer



SERVING EVERY MISSISSIPPIAN



Delivering Veterinary Care to Our Communities

Our nationally ranked Shelter Medicine Program delivers vital services to animal shelters across Mississippi. By providing free spay and neuter services, CVM students gain essential experience, with each completing over 60 surgeries during their rotations. This program directly supports local communities by managing pet populations and ensuring compassionate care throughout the state.

Serving Families and Educators

MSUES's Mississippi LIFT Resource and Referral Centers offer free educational materials and school readiness support statewide. When students need support with homework and school projects, mobile units deliver the resources needed to help them succeed. These centers prepare children for school success and reduce achievement gaps that require costly remediation later. Expansion would serve more families in vulnerable communities and improve outcomes while lowering long-term education costs.



Supporting Producer Resilience

Mississippi producers face challenges—volatile markets, rising input costs, emerging pests, and personal stress—that threaten profitability, productivity, and well-being. MSUES agricultural economists help farmers navigate financial risks, and health specialists provide mental health resources and stress management strategies. In the field, specialists and ag agents are often first to recognize and respond to new, emerging pests like the recently identified invasive cotton jassid.

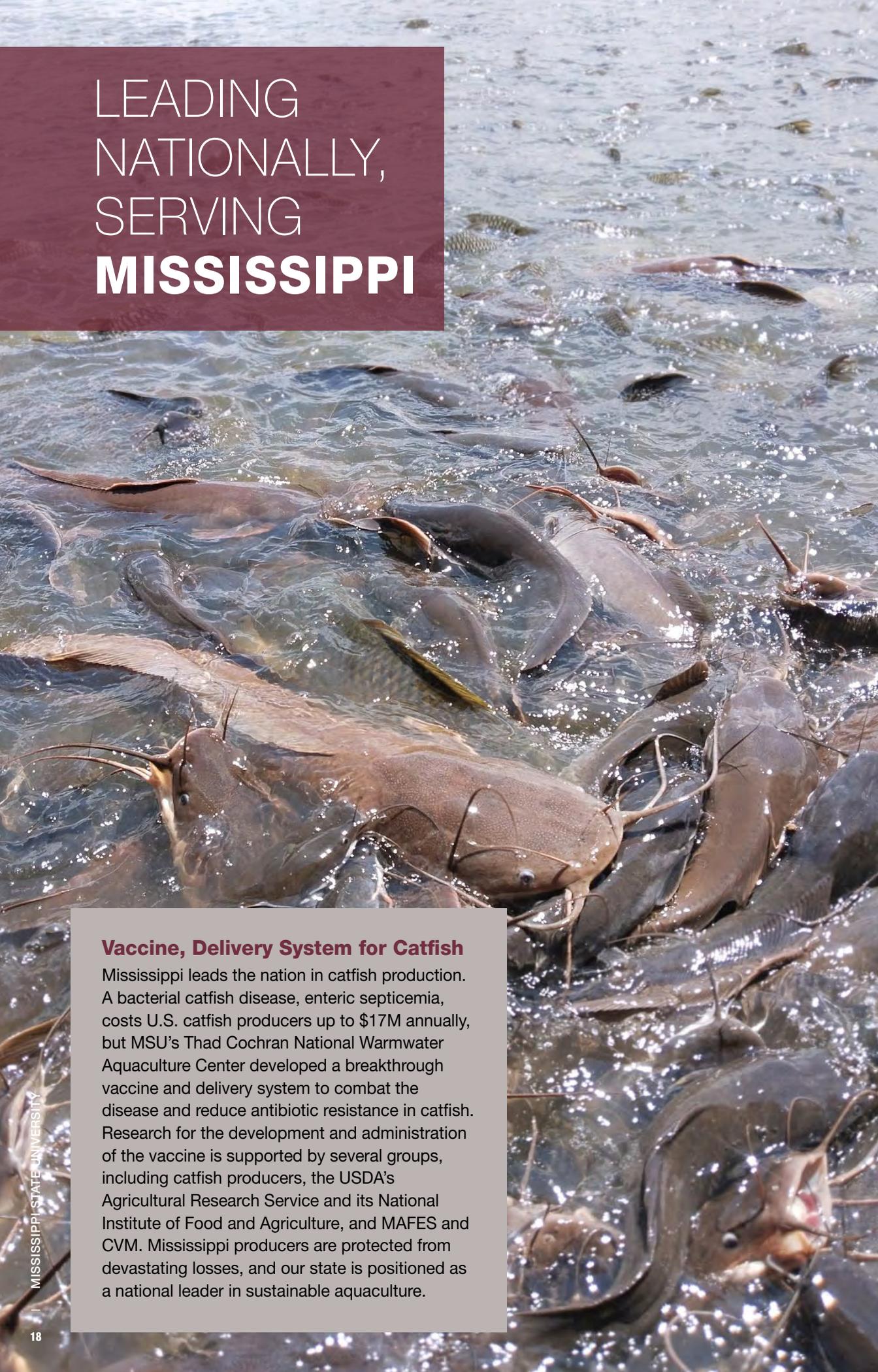


Expanding Vision 2030

Nearly 75% of Mississippi's harvested crops and timber leave the state, with more than half processed elsewhere and becoming higher-value products, which costs the state's economy more than \$10B each year. Vision 2030, led by DAFVM researchers partnering with producers, industry leaders, and statewide organizations, is working to capture more of that value here at home. By identifying opportunities to expand in-state processing and manufacturing, the initiative aims to create better-paying jobs, revitalize rural communities, and build career pathways that keep young people in Mississippi. Agriculture and forestry—our state's leading industries—already generate \$46.2B annually and account for one in every nine jobs. Vision 2030 is ensuring that more of that success stays in Mississippi.



VISION 2030



LEADING NATIONALLY, SERVING **MISSISSIPPI**

Vaccine, Delivery System for Catfish

Mississippi leads the nation in catfish production. A bacterial catfish disease, enteric septicemia, costs U.S. catfish producers up to \$17M annually, but MSU's Thad Cochran National Warmwater Aquaculture Center developed a breakthrough vaccine and delivery system to combat the disease and reduce antibiotic resistance in catfish. Research for the development and administration of the vaccine is supported by several groups, including catfish producers, the USDA's Agricultural Research Service and its National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and MAFES and CVM. Mississippi producers are protected from devastating losses, and our state is positioned as a national leader in sustainable aquaculture.



#1

Aquaculture



#2

Animal Health



#3

Weed Control

National Leader in Research that Matters to Mississippi – DAFVM ranks nationally among the top three institutions in aquaculture, animal health, and weed control, areas of research vital to our state’s economy.

Aquatic Animal Health Support

The Gulf Coast Aquatic Health Lab, part of CVM’s Global Center for Aquatic Health and Food Security, protects the Gulf Coast’s aquaculture and fisheries industries and houses the largest, most comprehensive team of aquatic specialists among U.S. veterinary colleges. It is recognized by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, as a Center for Knowledge in aquatic animal health.

Animal Health Leadership

CVM is designated as the only FAO Reference Center for Antimicrobial Resistance in the U.S. and one of only four worldwide. Our faculty lead international efforts to combat drug-resistant infections that threaten Mississippi’s livestock, food, and public health. With one of only three population medicine residency programs approved by the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine, CVM is home to the largest number of board-certified epidemiologists and preventive medicine specialists among U.S. veterinary colleges.

Progress Against Resistant Weeds

MAFES researchers serve as the southern hub for the Herbicide Resistance Monitoring Network, a multi-institutional effort funded by the United Soybean Board. Their work is essential for Mississippi soybean farmers’ profitability and positions MSU as an indispensable partner in protecting yields across the American soybean industry.

Innovations for Agriculture

Through a master research agreement with John Deere, MAFES researchers, in collaboration with the Agricultural Autonomy Institute, are developing technology to automate critical steps in cotton production. The institute also secured \$1M from the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida to develop automated harvesting systems.



PROTECTING MISSISSIPPI

I was able to see how MSU is truly leading the way in cutting-edge technology as we fight for food security and farm security, meaning national security.

—*Brooke Rollins*

U.S. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE,
*announcing the Rural Veterinary
Action Plan to combat the
nationwide shortage of rural
veterinarians and address critical
needs relating to food, animal
health, and large animal care in
rural areas*

Bridging Agriculture and National Security

The new MSU Food and Agriculture as Competitive Statecraft Collaboratory brings together experts in agriculture, veterinary medicine, political science, and cybersecurity to strengthen America's food systems and defense readiness. The collaboratory also trains future leaders through a new course linking agriculture and national security.

Protecting Military and Civilians with Nerve Agent Antidote Research

CVM researchers are developing critical countermeasures to protect both military personnel and civilian populations from chemical threats.

Using Innovative Tools to Safeguard Mississippi's Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Economy

- **Stopping illegal logging:** scientists in FWRC have developed an app—WhatWood?—to help inspectors verify timber exports, protect lumber businesses, and sustain global supply chains.
- **Outsmarting invasive wild pigs:** scientists in FWRC are using GPS tracking and behavioral modeling to help landowners control wild pigs, a species that causes \$1.6B in U.S. agricultural losses annually.
- **Detecting pine beetle outbreaks early:** to preserve jobs and the state's \$19B forest and forest products industry, scientists in FWRC have developed a method to use satellites to monitor southern pine beetle infestations before they devastate forests.

Partnering with the U.S. Department of Defense to Protect Critical Infrastructure

Through a \$3.3M Department of Defense partnership, FWRC scientists are advancing mass timber durability, rapid railway tie testing, and resilient military construction. These innovations protect U.S. infrastructure, enable disaster response, and open new markets for southern yellow pine.

Mapping Ticks to Protect Humans and Animals

FWRC researchers map tick populations to protect public health, animal health, and Mississippi's cattle industry. By identifying hot spots, ranchers may prevent costly outbreaks of the tick-borne disease anaplasmosis to help save millions from losses while protecting food security.



TAKING CARE OF **OUR STATE**

Delta Research and Extension Center

DREC

Mississippi leads catfish production in the U.S., and DREC serves the industry and producers through multidisciplinary expertise. MAFES, CVM, MSUES, and USDA Agricultural Research

Service professionals address industry challenges, promote economic viability, and advance fish health and welfare in warmwater aquaculture.

Key research areas include production practices, economics, water quality, pond ecology, nutrition, fish health management and diagnostics, and genetic improvement of broodstock. Since 2009, our experts have helped producers increase production by 59 percent to ensure the sustainability of the U.S. catfish industry.



Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center

CMREC

CMREC supports agricultural producers, landowners, and communities by balancing the challenges of enhancing wildlife habitat in some areas and managing human-wildlife conflict in others. The goal is to allow Mississippians to enjoy nature and agricultural producers to sustainably produce food. Scientists at CMREC study wildlife—the commercial and residential development impacts, how to deter crop damage, and what plant mixes will attract more wildlife. These efforts allow producers, consumers, and policymakers to make informed decisions.



North Mississippi Research and Extension Center

NMREC

As the nation's third-largest sweet potato producer, Mississippi maintains its competitive edge through innovation. NMREC researchers work directly with growers to enhance production— from field to market. Through studies on variety performance, nutrient management, harvest practices, and post-harvest handling, MAFES scientists and MSUES specialists provide growers with data-driven practices that increase yields, improve quality, and reduce costs. These efforts ensure growers maintain profitability, meet market demand, and sustain one of the state's most valuable specialty crops.



Coastal Research and Extension Center

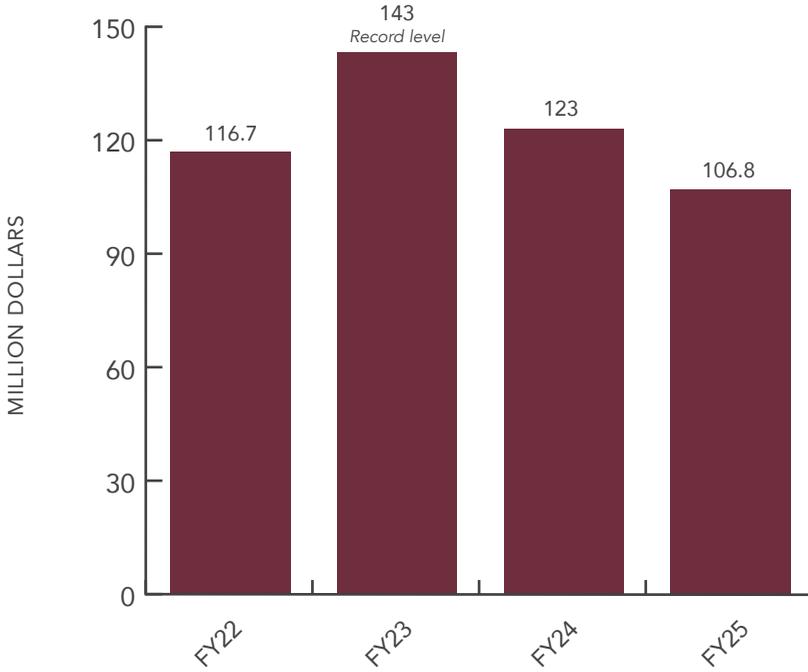
CREC

At CREC, MAFES scientists preserve rare heirloom sugarcane varieties once maintained by the USDA. Each October, backyard growers attend the harvest and seed cane sale and continue a tradition rooted in syrup-making history. These cultivars, entrusted to MSU after the USDA's Sugar Crops Field Station closed in Meridian 40 years ago, are now used in both traditional syrup production and modern craft applications like Agricole-style rum. This work connects science, heritage, and community engagement.

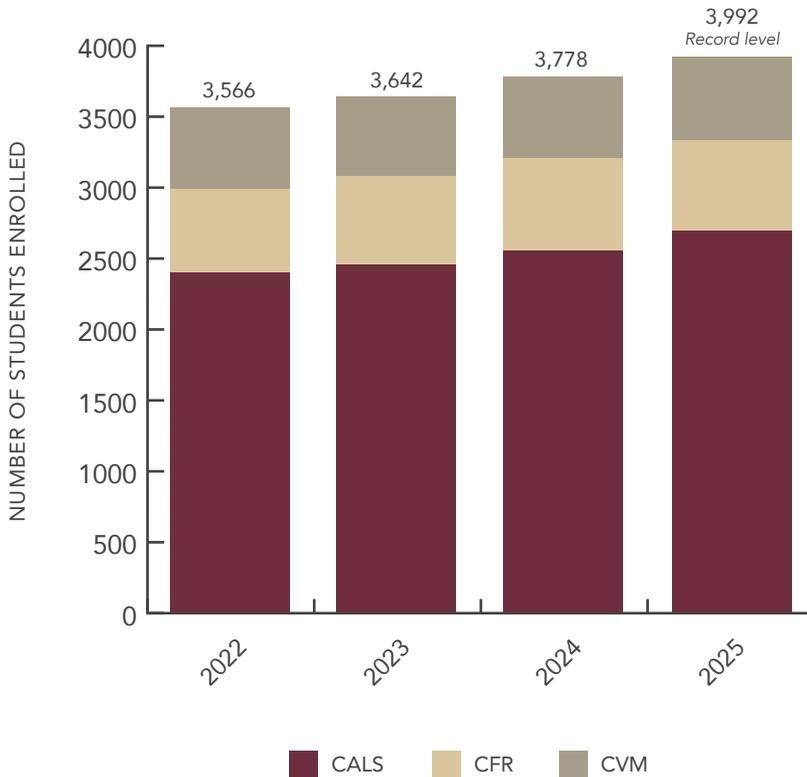


BUDGET OVERVIEW

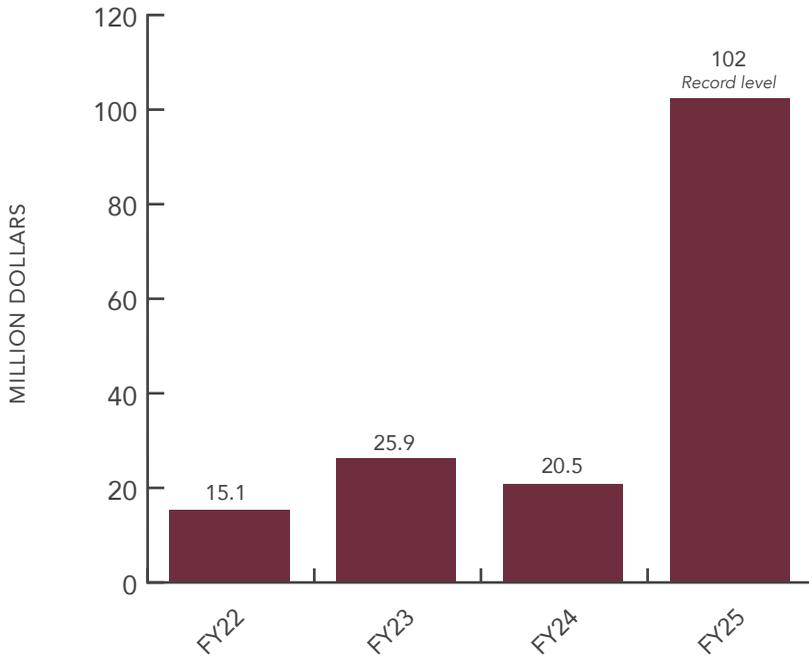
Grants & Contracts Received



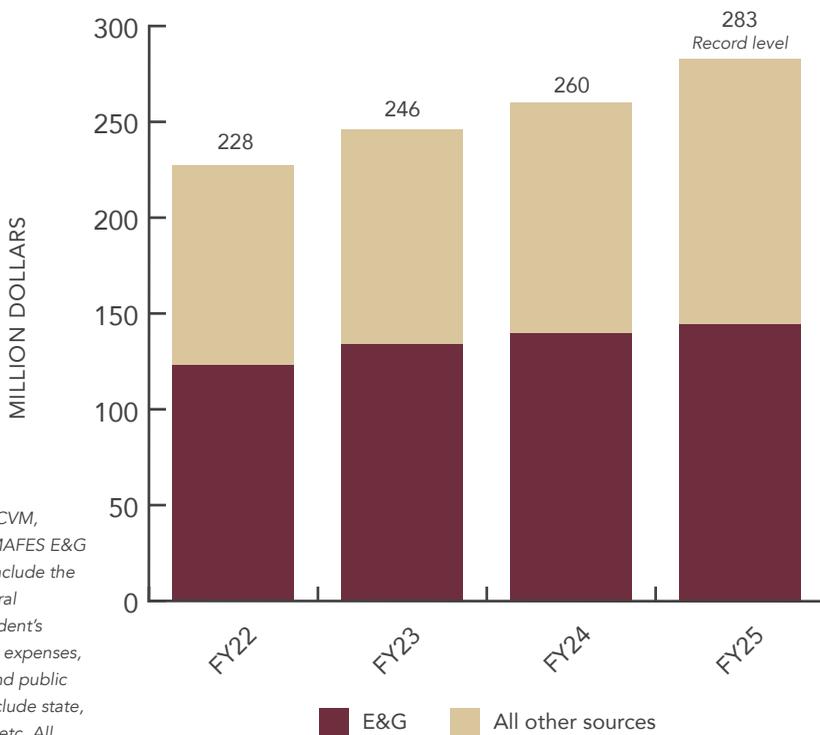
Enrollment



Private Contributions



Total Expenditures



This graph combines CVM, FWRC, MSUES, and MAFES E&G expenditures, which include the educational and general spending for each student's education and related expenses, organized research, and public service. E&G funds include state, federal, tuition, sales, etc. All other sources include restricted and designated funds.

TRAINING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL CAREERS AND STRENGTHENING **OUR STATE'S** FUTURE



4-H

Emmy Tolar, an 18-year-old 4-H'er with autism, shows livestock and works part-time in Columbia, Mississippi. Her success in 4-H livestock programs earned her a Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions scholarship. Tolar says 4-H taught her she can achieve anything she sets her mind to—her diagnosis doesn't define her.

College of Veterinary Medicine

Hayden Miller of Ethel, Mississippi, chose CVM because it offers two full years of hands-on clinical training and specialized poultry programs. He is the recipient of the prestigious Bardsley Scholarship and is actively involved with CVM's Small Ruminant, Swine, and Poultry Club, the Christian Veterinary Fellowship, and the Veterinary Business Management Association. Miller plans to become a poultry veterinarian to help produce a secure food supply.





College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Claire Green of North Little Rock, Arkansas, is majoring in biochemistry with a concentration in entomology. She chose CALS for its exceptional research opportunities, including her focus on honeybees and the floral species they depend on in Mississippi. Her commitment to research and public service has earned her the highly competitive Udall and Truman scholarships, and she is also a finalist for the Rhodes Scholarship. Green plans to continue her studies in graduate school where she will study the overlap between entomology and veterinary medicine.

College of Forest Resources

Benjamin Wiley, a sustainable bioproducts major with a business concentration, was drawn to CFR for its welcoming community and its sustainable bioproducts program. The Starkville, Mississippi, native has researched engineered wood composites and alternative feedstocks, innovations that could help Mississippi's timber industry create new revenue streams from agricultural waste and attract advanced manufacturing jobs. After graduation, Wiley plans to pursue a master's in business before entering the forest products industry.



YOUR GIFTS MATTER

Private gifts help support students, recruit and retain the best faculty, and fund research that matters.

For more information about how private gifts impact Mississippi State University, visit **msufoundation.com**.



The Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, founded on the MSU campus in 1946, continues to share DAFVM's mission of extending knowledge and fostering youth development in agriculture. Annually, the association contributes more than \$50K to a variety of MSU programs and activities, including Mississippi 4-H youth livestock programs and MSU student groups, like the Collegiate Cattlemen's Association. The Mississippi Cattlemen's Association also partners with MSUES to host cattle producer education meetings in all 82 Mississippi counties.



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY,
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