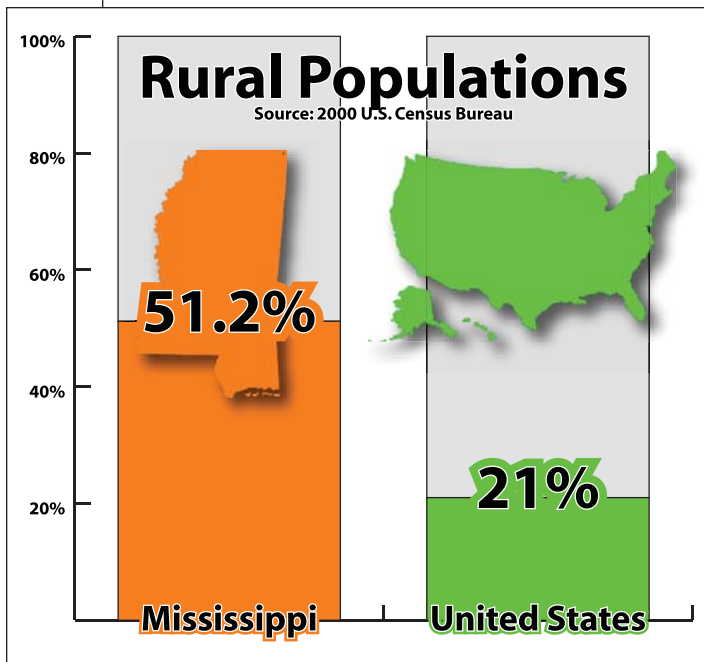


## Bringing Stability and Prosperity to Mississippi's Rural Communities

**M**ississippi remains one of the most rural states in the nation, and its rural communities are in dire need of programs which will stabilize them and allow them to grow. Key resources in creating stability and prosperity for rural Mississippians are the agriculture programs at Alcorn State University (ASU) and Mississippi State University (MSU).



Mississippi's valuable agriculture programs are in danger of being heavily compromised due to budget cuts. Since 2000, funding for ASU's agriculture program has decreased by 43.3 percent, and funding for MSU's agriculture program (excluding the veterinary medicine program) has decreased by 7.3 percent. The state stands to lose not only valuable services, but also federal matching dollars if these agricultural funds are not restored.

### Specifically, what services do the ASU and MSU agriculture programs provide?

- Find solutions to pressing rural issues.
- Safeguard the environment through research on pesticide runoff, soil erosion, energy production, and other issues.
- Develop improvements in agriculture products to give Mississippi farms a competitive advantage in the marketplace.
- Identify markets for Mississippi agricultural products.
- Foster development of competent citizens and consumers and strong Mississippi families.
- Strengthen Mississippi communities.
- Conserve the state's natural resources.
- Maximize the economic impact of Mississippi agricultural, aquatic, and forest industries.
- Bring matching federal funds into the state.

**IHL asks the Legislature to restore funding of the Alcorn State University and Mississippi State University agriculture programs to their 2000 levels. This level of funding will allow the universities to continue serving rural Mississippi through extension services and research.**