

# Introduction

*Since James Oglethorpe settled Georgia in 1733, agriculture has played a major role in the economic development and progression of the state. While cotton served as farmers' mainstay for many years, the movement for diversification was promoted after the Civil War. This movement prompted many farmers, in spite of various obstacles, to pursue the production of livestock, poultry, naval stores, bees and a variety of vegetable and horticultural crops.*

*Some of these endeavors, such as the broiler industry, proved most successful, while others, such as rice and sugar cane production, have declined through the years. Yet, each of these commodities has contributed to the strength and diversity of Georgia's present agricultural structure.*

*"Agriculture is the most healthy, the most useful and the most noble employment of man," noted George Washington, farmer and first president of our nation. No matter how urbanized and industrialized Georgia becomes, agriculture will remain a vital part of the state's future progress and success.*