Partnerships
The Center is eager to explore new partnerships that will expand the use of the SRRC Pilot Plant facilities. Current areas of research interest include food processing, oilseed extraction, fiber processing and finishing, pyrolysis processes, biofuels development, and environmental testing. However, most areas of value-added agricultural product and process development can be accommodated.

A number of industry-government interactions have been undertaken within the pilot plants from specific short-term research projects, with SRRC personnel performing most of the work, to extended interactive collaborations, with external personnel located onsite over sustained periods.

Equipment and Operations Supported Within the Facilities
- Milling equipment (knife, hammer, attrition, pin mills, etc.)
- Reactors (glass and stainless steel jacketed reactors)
- Fiber carding, drawing, spinning, knitting, and weaving operations
- Non-woven fiber processing
- Fabric wet processing, dyeing, and chemical treatments
- Solvent extraction and processing
- Extrusion (single and twin barrel screw extruders)
- Ultrafiltration
- Ultrasonic treatment
- Evaporation
- Pelleting
- Pyrolysis
- Heat treatment (ovens, furnaces)
- Freeze-drying (barrel, shelf, manifold)
- Fermentation
- Particle separations (screening, air classification, gravity table separations)
- Dehulling
- Blending and mixing

ARS Mission
The Agricultural Research Service conducts research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provides information access and dissemination to:
- ensure high-quality, safe food and other agricultural products
- assess the nutritional needs of Americans
- sustain a competitive agricultural economy
- enhance the natural resource base and the environment, and
- provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

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The Southern Regional Research Center (SRRC) in the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service has three pilot plant facilities as part of its operations. Included are the Industrial Pilot Plant, historically used for milling and oilseed extraction, the Food Pilot Plant, used for many food processing operations, and the Textile Mill, used to support cotton fiber and textile production and finishing work. These facilities are core components of four Research Management Units and have been essential components of the SRRC’s research programs over the past 65 years.

Recent improvements include two new one meter-wide non-woven fabrication lines (one needlepunch and one hydroentanglement) installed in the textile area; fiber processing, mini-spinning, warping, weaving, dyeing, and finishing units added to the Textile Mill; and a new cabinet oven, barrel freeze dryer, and gravity table separator installed in the Industrial Pilot Plant. Additional units will continue to be made operational as projects evolve.

Both the Industrial Pilot Plant and the Food Pilot Plant have one- and two-story sections. The Textile Mill is housed on two single-story floors in a separate building. The Industrial Pilot Plant also has non-hazardous and explosion-proof bays. Combined, the three facilities occupy around 40,000 sq ft and are all supported by common industrial utilities.