



RESEARCH

Doing our part for U.S. biodefense UI studies infectious diseases

UI College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) scientists will do their part for the nation's biodefense program by conducting basic research into the nature of certain infectious diseases and the bacteria that cause them.

The UI is part of a consortium that recently established a \$50 million Regional Center of Excellence for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases Research.

The Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) regional medical education program based at the University of Washington won funding for the center from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The UI role, led by three CALs faculty members will include development of vaccines and immune-system stimulants to fight naturally occurring and introduced disease agents identified as bioterrorism risks. The work also will include a project to track the expression of genes in disease agents as they colonize their hosts.

Preventive medicine is the goal of the new WWAMI center. The center also will focus on applied research projects leading to treatments. Researchers participating in the new center will also teach first-year microbiology to Idaho medical students.

"We are proud to participate in this program," said Richard Heimsch, UI Agricultural Research Experiment Station director. "The selection shows the University of Idaho has researchers with the expertise and the facilities to pursue science of national importance. The project also underscores the increasingly close ties between agricultural and human health research," he added.

The UI share of the project is expected to total about \$2 million. Since 2000, the university has attracted some \$30 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health.

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AGRICULTURE

UI weed scientist nets new herbicide for spuds

When UI weed scientist Pamela Hutchinson read about a new herbicide for soybeans four years ago, she resolved to see it labeled for use in Idaho potatoes. Offering a novel mode-of-action entirely different from other potato weedkillers, Spartan looked promising against hairy nightshade and herbicide-resistant kochia, common lambsquarters, and redroot pigweed. Hutchinson, based in Aberdeen, persuaded manufacturer FMC to support the necessary research to register Spartan

in potatoes—a crop considered "minor-acreage" by national standards.

The result: a newly registered weedkiller for Idaho growers that destroys even herbicide-resistant broadleaf weed seedlings as they emerge in potato fields. "We had to lobby aggressively," says Hutchinson, "but growers need more choices in herbicides in order to prevent or delay development of herbicide-resistant weeds."

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DID YOU KNOW?

5th Idaho's national ranking in 2000 for hydropower production (10,967 megawatts).

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

FAMILY

4-H materials embraced in Idaho K-12 classrooms

The world of Idaho 4-H has grown larger in recent years as schools welcome into their classrooms curricula developed by the nation's senior youth development program.

The reason behind the trend is no mystery, said the UI's Idaho State 4-H Director Arlinda Nauman.

"Units are well planned and have specific content so teachers can understand their value," Nauman said. The subjects are diverse, ranging from science-based lessons from the Junior Master Gardener program to ones promoting financial literacy for teens.

The 4-H program statewide also continues to value and assist club-based activities.

School programs offer the opportunity to reach more youths and help teachers meet academic standards, Nauman said. "We've got to be a partner in helping them achieve what they need to as teachers."

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