

UTIA Press Release

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UT Agriculture Receives More Than \$5 Million in Federal Grants

The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture has been awarded six federal grants for research projects worth more than \$5.6 million.

Senator Bill Frist recently announced the largest single grant of \$1.75 million to support the joint Appalachian Horticulture Research unit of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Tennessee State University is a co-sponsor of the project.

"The grant will be used to develop new varieties of dogwoods that are resistant to powdery mildew and anthracnose," said Buddy Mitchell, interim vice president for agriculture. "These diseases have a major negative financial impact on the Tennessee horticulture industry." Mitchell added that basic breeding research will be conducted by faculty and graduate students at UT's agricultural campus while growing and testing of the new varieties will occur at the Tennessee State experiment station in McMinnville and at selected private nurseries across the state.

"This joint relationship with Tennessee State will provide significant service to the horticulture industry. We are grateful to the Tennessee congressional delegation for funding this important initiative and other critical needs of the UT Institute of Agriculture. The funding enables us to enhance our service to Tennessee agricultural and natural resource industries," Mitchell said.

The UT Institute of Agriculture and UT Knoxville will receive another \$1 million to create a Natural Resources Policy Center to address public policy issues regarding the management and use of natural resources. The center will be a joint effort between the College of Engineering, the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries and the Department of Agricultural Economics.

Other federal funding designated for the UT Institute of Agriculture includes:

- \$1 million for a second year of funding for the Biosurveillance, Agricultural and Environmental Security Initiative for the College of Veterinary Medicine, the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station and the Center for Environmental Biotechnology. The initiative is focused on developing advanced bio-based sensors and on modeling and toxicology measures that should sense and predict epidemiological patterns in the field.
- \$750,000 for the Southeastern Regional Sun Grant Center in the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station. The funds will support the development of bio-based energy technologies and educational programs.
- \$680,000 for the West Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station in Jackson. The grant will support cropping systems research and efforts to improve crop value. Results should help farmers in the Mississippi River watershed optimize disease control while maintaining the best crop management practices to protect soil and water quality.
- \$450,000 to the Tennessee Forest Products Center. The funds will support wood utilization research and the development of engineered wood products including composites, strand-oriented materials and other value-added products that are important to Tennessee's forestry industry.

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