

PRESS RELEASE

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Farm Foundation Involved in \$2 Million Study in Agricultural Biotechnology

Farm Foundation is one of the collaborating institutions receiving a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a national study of university-industry relationships in agricultural biotechnology. The grant is funded from the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems under USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service.

The three-year project "Public Goods and University-Industry Relationships in Agricultural Biotechnology" will assess university-industry research, licensing, and other partnerships, with special emphasis on the mix of public and private goods provided through agricultural biotechnology. While the project will be headquartered at Portland State University and headed by Project Director Dave Ervin, a professor in Portland State University's Environmental Sciences and Resources Program, Farm Foundation will have a major role in disseminating project findings to policy makers and private sector decision makers.

"With agricultural biotechnology research being carried out increasingly in the private sector, often in collaboration with university researchers, questions about the relationships between universities and companies to develop agricultural biotechnology products are the subject of much speculation and little scientific information. Farm Foundation is pleased to be involved with one of the first studies to improve our understanding of the relationships, their effects on products and appropriate policies to address any potential issues," according to Walter J. Armbruster, President of Farm Foundation based in Oak Brook, Illinois. Farm Foundation's mission is to improve the economic and social well-being of U.S. agriculture and rural people by helping public and private sector decision makers identify and understand forces that will shape the future.

Agricultural biotechnology has the potential to improve production and human health and reduce pollution. The project investigators will interview university and industry personnel; conduct a survey of university scientists, technology officers and administrators; and undertake socioeconomic analysis to identify problems and potential policies to foster the development of products with traits that promote widespread public benefits. Project findings will inform key stakeholders about the manner in which agricultural biotechnology research is planned, coordinated and rewarded; and stimulate constructive dialogue among academics, commercial firms and policy makers.

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