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Washington, DC 20250-1300 • Voice: (202) 720-4623 • Email: oc.news@usda.gov • Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

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Contact:
USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Visits OSU, Highlights Cancer-Fighting Research and 150 Years of Land Grant University Partnerships

COLUMBUS, Ohio, June 28, 2012—Shining a light on agricultural research that has implications for fighting cancer, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today visited The Ohio State University's (OSU) Center for Advanced Functional Foods Research and Entrepreneurship (CAFFRE), where researchers are studying the development of novel functional foods and components that offer impressive benefits to health. Vilsack's visit coincides with the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the land grant university system with the signing of the Morrill Act of 1862.

"Many people do not understand the contributions to human health that agricultural research makes," said Vilsack. "But here at Ohio State, there are many vivid examples showcasing the essential role agricultural research plays in solving some of the world's most pressing health problems, all while building and revitalizing rural America."

CAFFRE researchers recently used a \$1,275,000 USDA grant to develop a soy-fortified tomato juice that could potentially benefit prostate cancer patients. They also are conducting clinical trials to study the impact of raspberries and a soy bread on certain cancers. Ohio State's business partners joined Vilsack to discuss how the research is making its way from crops to the clinic to the consumer.

USDA partners with Ohio State on a wide variety of food and agricultural research that provides an important investment in the Columbus community and beyond. Currently, OSU has 67 active research and integrated grants competitively awarded through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), funded at more than \$28.5 million. OSU regularly receives annual capacity building allocations to fund agricultural research and extension. In federal fiscal year 2012, the institution received over \$13 million in extension formula dollars and over \$8 million in formula research dollars from USDA/NIFA.

NIFA's flagship competitive grants program established under the 2008 Farm Bill is the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). AFRI makes awards in five challenge areas—childhood obesity prevention, global food security, climate variability, food safety, and sustainable bioenergy—and through foundational and fellowship programs. The AFRI challenge areas will continue to support societal challenge areas where research, education, and extension can achieve significant and measurable outcomes. Examples of grants recently awarded to OSU scientists are:

- OSU food scientists are working to increase the absorption of antioxidants by the human body. By encapsulating the antioxidants in plant-based polymers, the researchers will create micro particles that can be broken down in the gastrointestinal tract. This award totaled approximately \$500,000 and will be conducted over 3 years.

- OSU researchers are using Hatch Act funds to study new and emerging intestinal diseases in swine and cattle. The scientists developed a real-time tool that can detect St. Valerian-like viruses in swine. This information can help prevent the spread of the disease to animals in other regions or even to humans.

Through federal funding and leadership for research, education and extension programs, USDA NIFA focuses on investing in science and solving critical issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future.

Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture partners with more than 100 state colleges and universities who in turn have graduated more than 20 million students; produced countless scientific breakthroughs; vastly increased agricultural productivity; and improved the lives of people everywhere.

Additional information on USDA research accomplishments [can be found here](#).

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