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New Foundation will Facilitate U.S. Department of Agriculture and Private Sector Research, Development, and Technology Partnerships

Nine economic development organizations from across the country comprise the Agricultural Technology Innovation Partnership Foundation

ARLINGTON, TEXAS (April 4, 2013) – Nine technology-based economic development organizations from across the United States have joined forces to form the **Agricultural Technology Innovation Partnership (ATIP) Foundation**, which will facilitate public-private research and technology licensing partnerships, and promote commercialization of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) research outcomes from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and its other scientific agencies.

The ATIP Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity with offices in Arlington, Texas and member offices in eight states. It is governed by members comprised of its founding economic development organizations: the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO); Innovate Mississippi; the Wisconsin Security Research Consortium; the Georgia Research Alliance; Pennsylvania's Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority; the California Association for Local Economic Development; the Kansas Bioscience Authority; the Center for Innovation at Arlington, Texas; and the Center for Innovative Food Technology (CIFT) in Toledo, Ohio. Each member of the Foundation also has a separate partnership intermediary agreement with ARS.

The ATIP Foundation will receive USDA requests to develop public-private consortia around specific initiatives of high national priority. The first of these focuses on land management practices to sustain soil health for producing food, feed, fiber and biofuels. A second initiative is in food and public health that addresses issues in translating nutrition research results to the food supply to combat obesity. The Foundation will assist in the formation of collaborative partnerships enabling the integration of venture capital with government, industry and academic R&D. Similarly, the ATIP Foundation will approach the USDA with private sector research needs to seek the expertise of the USDA's science and technology agencies.

"We expect our partnership with USDA will produce results that the agricultural community will use to solve some of the most difficult problems facing our country today," said Wes Jurey, ATIP Foundation organizing member in Texas. "Private capital combined with the expertise of public researchers and the Foundation's tech-based business know-how will achieve efficiencies in R&D that were not previously possible."

In January 2013, the ATIP Foundation's members appointed Richard Brenner, Ph.D., as Director. Brenner's role is to coordinate activities of the member organizations in planning regional events to deliver solutions to the agricultural sector, and to develop outreach strategies to facilitate partnerships with the private sector.

“With the world population expected to exceed nine billion by 2050, increased demand for food and water will challenge our agricultural R&D infrastructure at a time when federal resources are diminishing,” said Brenner. “This Foundation represents a new model for enhancing economic sustainability and U.S. competitiveness through public-private partnerships capitalizing on federal scientific research.”

ATIP Foundation member organizations TEDCO (Maryland) and CIFT (Ohio) achieved early success in delivering solutions to the agriculture sector at the regional level by combining research outcomes arising from federal and university research with complementary assets such as access to capital, manufacturing capabilities and marketing strategies. Such forums were jointly piloted in Maryland by ARS and TEDCO in 2011, and were expanded to Ohio in 2012 through ATIP member CIFT.

“Our experience in Maryland working with the USDA’s ARS and rural communities has yielded successes for several agricultural communities now able to fully exploit tech-driven solutions,” said Rob Rosenbaum, president and executive director of TEDCO. “Applying the technology transfer expertise that the ATIP Foundation’s member organizations have developed, along with private capital and public resources, is a major step in the right direction for agricultural R&D in this country.”

Ohio was the first state to tailor a forum specifically towards the food processing sector which gained support from the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST-MEP) - the premier technical organization in the manufacturing field. "The Ohio Specialty Crop Forum provided a venue in which growers were informed of technologies developed by USDA of immediate value to production challenges. This is a strategic approach versus a traditional top down model for engagement. The combination will certainly be positive to the food industry overall," stated Dave Beck, President and CEO of CIFT.

“ARS scientists look forward to working with the ATIP Foundation and its member organizations to enhance transfer of important research results and technology to private use for the benefit of our country. ARS has a long history of successfully moving technologies into use from penicillin to enhanced cotton products, to enhanced animal and plant varieties. Through both educational and commercial means this Foundation can help the process move more quickly” said Edward Knipling, Administrator of ARS. For more information on the ATIP Foundation and its members, visit www.atipfoundation.com.

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