

K-State team awarded grant for research on wheat disease

Kansas State University researcher Barbara Valent and a team of colleagues have been awarded \$5.5 million by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop novel disease control strategies for two closely-related diseases in rice and wheat – the latter of which

Wheat in Kansas:

According to the National Association of Wheat Growers:

- Kansas produces enough wheat each year to bake 36 billion loaves of bread.
- Kansas produces enough wheat each year to feed everyone in the world, over six billion people, for about two

weeks.

- An acre of Kansas wheat produces enough bread to feed nearly 9,000 people for one day.

National Association of Wheat Growers
Fast Facts www.wheat-world.org/wheat-info/fast-facts/

is grown in Kansas, according to the Kansas Wheat Commission. About half of Kansas wheat is exported to other countries.

In 2012, Kansas produced 382 million bushels of winter wheat and overall U.S. production totaled 1.65 billion bushels, according to

the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

One of the many problems posed by wheat blast is that it looks a lot like some other wheat diseases, so it's sometimes hard to detect, said Stack, who serves as the director of the Great Plains Diagnostic Network, a consortium of nine states which is part of the National Plant Diagnostic Center. The network coordinates diagnostics, communications and trains first detectors of plant diseases.

Because wheat blast has not been found in North American wheat, it is critical that the team's research be conducted in a secure facility. For that reason, the scientists are working in K-State's Biosecurity Research Institute, a facility that provides a safe and secure location to study high-consequence pathogens.

The grant, awarded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, was part of more than \$75 million in grants recently awarded to teams at 21 universities. The teams are working in research, education and extension activities to ensure greater food security in the United States and around the world, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Information about wheat blast is available at www.k-state.edu/wheatblast/. Information about rice blast is available at www.ap-snet.org/edcenter/intropp/lessons/fungi/ascomycetes/Pages/Rice-Blast.aspx.

Typically, about one-fifth of all wheat grown in the United States

has wreaked havoc in some South American wheat growing areas.

Wheat blast was first discovered in Brazil in 1985, and has since been found in Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina. Three years ago it cut production in Brazilian wheat states by up to 60 percent in some areas.

Rice blast caused significant crop losses in fields in Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas in 2012 and the disease has already been reported this year in Louisiana.

"Our goal is to develop resistant varieties for control of both diseases," Valent said. "We plan to use traditional strategies for finding and deploying resistance genes, as well as novel strategies based on new knowledge generated by research on rice blast."

Additional outcomes will be diagnostic tools, training resources for first detectors and responders, and a disease forecasting model. "Another important objective for this project is to educate undergraduate students in plant biosecurity."

"Arguably, rice and wheat are the two most important crops in the world," said K-State professor of plant pathology, James Stack, who is one of the research team members. "In most countries, either wheat or rice is a staple in citizens' diets. It's hard for people who have ready access to food to understand, but threats to either of those crops can be the difference between food security and hunger."

Both wheat blast and rice blast are explosive diseases under favorable weather conditions. Blast disease, caused by the fungus *Magnaporthe oryzae*, is a major constraint to global rice production and is an emerging and very serious threat to U.S. wheat, Valent said. Rice blast research over the past 20 years has provided a wealth of understanding on the molecular basis for blast resistance in rice.

"Our goal is to leverage this knowledge as part of an integrated approach to improve U.S. rice production and protect the na-



ANGIE MOORE/Colby Free Press

Kara Roulier painted her mug at Summer Art Class.

Brewster school shows off students' artwork at museum

Brewster High School art students have artwork on display at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. The work will be displayed through mid-July; stop by and check it out!

Many children are enjoying Michele Werth's art classes this summer. Michele does a lot of fun projects with the kids.

Another project is being sponsored by the Beta Women's Club, with summer reading from 1 to 2:30 p.m. each Wednesday.

Plans are being made to celebrate Brewster's 125th Birth-



Angie Moore

• Brewster Correspondent

day on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2013. Activities will include an antique car, tractor, and motorcycle show, 5K and 1 mile run/walk for all ages, a chili cook-off, a parade, a talent show, and a street dance. The Lions Club will be serving lunch. Supper

will be provided by the junior class. There will be games and activities for all ages throughout the day. More information will be available soon from the Brewster Library and Heritage Board. Make plans to attend.

If you have Brewster news or upcoming events you would like to share please let me know. E-mail angiem@st-tel.net, call 694-3008, or drop information off at the Prairie Land Insurance office.

Longest German-language word now gone

BERLIN (AP) – A tweak to state laws in the German state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania to conform with current EU regulations has caused an unexpected casualty: the longest word in the German language.

The Rindfleischetikettier-

ungsueberwachungsaufgabeneu-

bertragungsgesetz is no more.

The "law delegating beef label monitoring" was introduced by the state in 1999 as part of measures against mad cow disease. But the dpa news agency reported Monday the law was removed

from the books last week because European Union regulations have changed.

The longest word in the German dictionary is Kraftfahrzeug-Haftpflichtversicherung: automobile liability insurance.

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