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MSU anti-counterfeit program and Michigan's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development partner on federally funded food fraud and economically motivated adulteration table-top exercise

EAST LANSING, Michigan-Michigan State University's Anti-Counterfeiting and Product Protection Program (A-CAPPP), in partnership with the Michigan State Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), received a \$100,000 grant from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a project that will develop and implement a Food Fraud and Economically Motivated Adulteration table-top exercise.

"The State of Michigan and Michigan State University have worked on many food safety and food defense issues including Food Fraud. This is another great example of leveraging the expertise and resources of an agency and a university," said Brad Deacon, MDARD's Emergency Management and Administrative Law Coordinator.

Table-top exercises are a way to expand the public-private partnership to address complex threats, and the State of Michigan through MDARD has spearheaded many of these types of exercises. This exercise, planned for late spring of 2013, will bring together federal, state and local agencies with industry, associations, and other academics. A fictitious incident will be presented and the entities will work through their responses. At the conclusion of the event, lessons learned and insights will be discussed. These table-top exercises have been an excellent way to help improve the safety of our nation's food supply.

MSU and MDARD have strong ties and working experience that will be leveraged for a unique and impactful experience.

"MSU researchers, John Spink and Doug Moyer, have been active participants with the state's Michigan Food and Agriculture Protection and Defense Working Group," said Deacon "Their work has become recognized on the national level across many agencies, partnering with them on this exercise was a logical step."

The grant runs until September 2013, and will address critical components of food defense, economically motivated adulteration (EMA) and food fraud incidents through the development and implementation of a food defense table-top exercise. The project will also take the lessons learned in the Michigan exercise to produce a template that other states and jurisdictions can use to test their preparedness and will fit into FDA's "Free-B" program, or table-top exercise in-a-box.

"FDA has stated they are working for both transparency and to facilitate efficiency in working with stakeholders. The table-top exercise and the Free-B program exemplify these efforts," stated MSU principal investigator John Spink.

While the focus on Food Fraud and Economically Motivated Adulteration has impacts on food safety issues, it also will have other benefits. By indentifying and reducing vulnerability to economic harm, the project will work to mitigate food defense issues, including the threat of malicious attacks.

MSU's Moyer stated "our work will contribute to minimize food fraud vulnerabilities. Because the threat is very complex, we take an interdisciplinary approach. This creates better understanding of the various perpetrators' motivations and capabilities. It also enables us to assess the efficacy of different countermeasures that are available."

The grant was funded through FDA's Innovative Food Defense Project and is formally managed through the National Institute of Health.

For more information about A-CAPPP, visit www.acappp@msu.edu or email Dr. John Spink at SpinkJ@msu.edu.

More information on Food Fraud can be found at:

<http://a-cappp.msu.edu/files/FoodFraudReferenceSheetFINAL.pdf>

and: <http://www.fda.gov/food/fooddefense/default.htm>

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