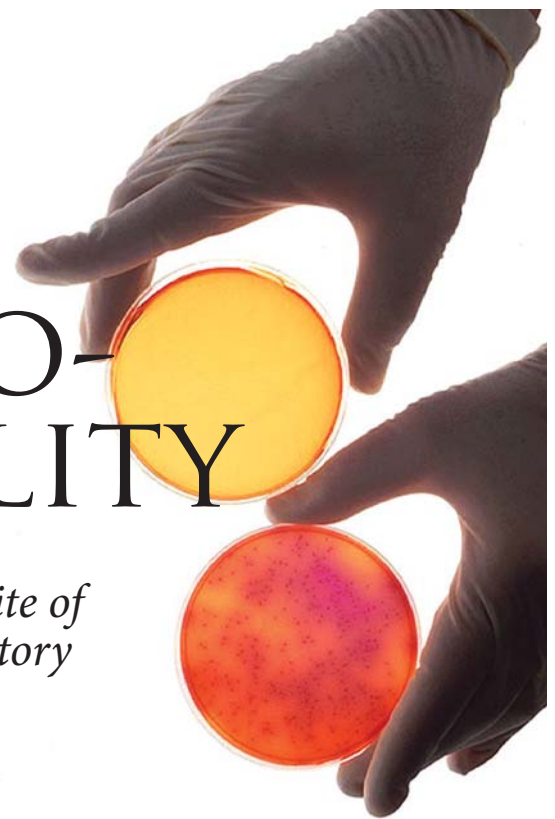


NATIONAL BIO AND AGRO- DEFENSE FACILITY

Manhattan is still in the running to be the site of a \$451 million state-of-the-art federal laboratory

BY KATIE MAYES



Researchers at K-State have long been on the front lines of animal health and food science.

At the turn of the 20th century, K-State scientists had already advanced vaccines to halt the spread of animal disease. That laid the foundation for K-State's College of Veterinary Medicine. A century later — and years before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 — K-State's attention was already focused on protecting the nation's food supply with the Homeland Defense Food Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness Program.

It's no surprise that K-State's bid to become home to a \$451 million state-of-the-art federal laboratory has risen to the top. That lab, the National Bio and Agro-defense Facility, or NBAF, will be America's first line of defense in the war against animal and agricultural disease.

The Department of Homeland Security first identified the need for NBAF when it became apparent there was a gap in the nation's strategy against bioterrorism. A lab on Plum Island in New York — where research involving foreign animal disease currently takes place — is aging and will not be able to keep pace with the needs of the future.

NBAF would be a 520,000-square-foot biocontainment lab, which would employ between 250 and 350 researchers and support staff. Those staff would work with a variety of diseases threatening food animals and agriculture.

Homeland Security started out with 29 expressions of interest, which was narrowed to a list of 17 potential locations. This summer, Manhattan made the top five. Other possible sites are in Georgia, North Carolina, Mississippi and Texas. Officials with the department also recently said renovating the Plum Island lab is an option.

Between now and next fall, the Department of Homeland Security will weigh the pros and cons of the various sites,

including Manhattan. They'll consider the proximity of the site to research capabilities, the available workforce, existing expertise in building and operating similar facilities and the level of community support.

K-State has all of that — and more.

Today, more than 150 K-Staters are active in the food safety and animal health arenas, and more than \$70 million has been invested in related research since 1999.

K-State has built a quality biocontainment facility in the Biosecurity Research Institute. Aside from demonstrating the university's commitment to high-level research, federal-level research could get a significant head start at K-State while the NBAF is built — a process anticipated to take until 2013 or 2014.

K-State and Manhattan also are in a part of the country where agriculture is king. Nearly half of the nation's grain-fed cattle, 40 percent of the hog population and 20 percent of beef cows and calves are within a 350-mile radius of Kansas — not to mention the millions of cattle that travel in and out of Kansas each year. More than 20 percent of Kansans are currently employed in the agricultural field. If a disease were introduced, intentionally or otherwise, the economic impact would be devastating.

Researchers at NBAF will tackle those threats head-on, developing ways to quickly diagnose and eliminate the threat of disease. NBAF is a vital piece of the nation's security infrastructure.

K-State always has taken to heart the security of the nation. The university's long-standing expertise in animal health and food safety, solid research background and agricultural roots make it the logical place to put the NBAF. 🐾

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are zoonotic diseases?

Zoonotic diseases are diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. Examples are rabies, tuberculosis and lyme disease.

Are there safety and security issues?

No. The site would be exceptionally safe and secure. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, all employees in similar facilities are strictly supervised by scientists who are trained and experienced in the highest caliber of bioscience. Laboratory access is strictly controlled and the structure of the facility is specially engineered for self-containment, security and safety.

How would this benefit Kansas?

Essentially, it would put Kansas on the map as a leader in medical, food and agricultural research, science and technology. The project is anticipated to create as many as 350 jobs and, over the next 20 years, generate an economic return of \$3.5 billion. Because it would attract private biotechnology companies and a professional workforce, NBAF will help support the state's infrastructure, attract more businesses to the area and create more collaborative opportunities for existing universities and research institutions.

The following sites have been chosen to advance to the next phase in the competitive process to select the location for the proposed facility:

Flora Industrial Park, Madison County, Miss.
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, MANHATTAN, KAN.
Texas Research Park, San Antonio, Texas
Umstead Research Farm, Granville County, N.C.
University of Georgia/South Milledge Ave., Athens, Ga.

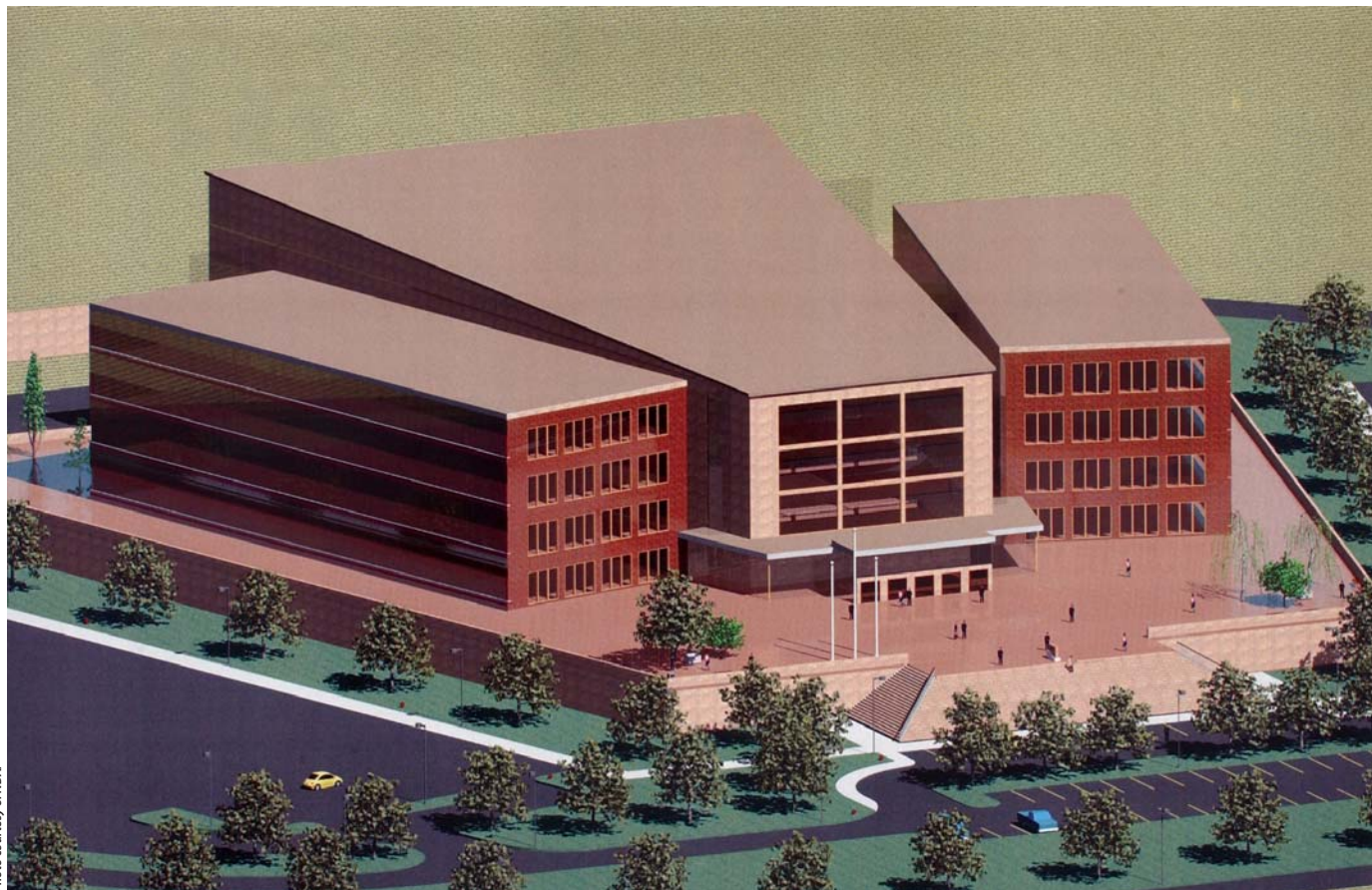


Photo courtesy of NBAF

An artist's rendering shows what the proposed National Bio and Agro-defense Facility may look like.