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A Broad Foundation for Intellectual Property

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A broad foundation for intellectual property

The Kansas State University Research Foundation's patent portfolio underscores the breadth and the depth of quality, economically significant research performed by university faculty members and students.

The Research Foundation's technologies include a plentiful and noncontroversial source of stem cells; a space glue; methods for improving wireless data and other communication systems; and a self-cleaning animal watering tank, among others — all made by the university's faculty and students.

Recently the Research Foundation was issued new patents for technologies to treat wastewaters, develop anti-Alzheimer drugs and create a synthetic antimicrobial peptide that improves the canine immune system. Pending patents include technologies for cancer detection and treatment; abdominal hemorrhages; improved disease and insect resistance in plants; a white wheat, Clara-CL; and numerous engineering solutions.

According to Marcia Molina, the foundation's vice president for technology transfer, being a land-grant university affords a rich and diverse base for scientific pursuits, many of which lead to intellectual property.

"A lot of Kansas State University's land-grant functions focus on applied research," Molina said. "If you look at animal sciences and industry, agronomy and grain science and industry, these are applied disciplines. Because of that, these areas often lead to discoveries that can more quickly lead to a marketable product, making for more opportunities."

The Research Foundation's portfolio includes 231 issued U.S. patents. An additional 45 patent applications are undergoing examination. Discoveries largely stem from Kansas State University's colleges of Agriculture, Engineering, Veterinary Medicine, and Arts and Sciences — which account for 94 percent of the overall intellectual property portfolio.

More than 40 of the Research Foundation's technologies are being licensed to industry through the Kansas State University Institute for Commercialization, a marketing partner that channels profits from the monetized technology into each partner's local and regional economies.

Patents in use include:

- A blood-typing kit for cats and dogs undergoing surgery;
- Resistant starch technology that increases fiber content by lowering digestible carbohydrates in foods like pastas, breads, crackers and chips;
- Animal feed technology for swine and cattle;
- A cattle vaccine for calf scours, or neonatal diarrhea; and
- Various laser technologies.

In addition to patents, the Research Foundation also manages copyrights, trademarks and protection of plant varieties and biological materials, Molina said.

The Kansas State University Research Foundation is also one of the first in the nation created to manage intellectual property in academia. It began operations in 1942 and included technologies for making stoppers for bottles and test tubes; plastic containers for frozen foods in freezer lockers; and dehydrating starchy vegetables and fruits.

By Greg Tammen, Communications and Marketing



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