



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **USDA AWARDS \$6 MILLION TO ADVANCE TREE GENOMICS AND BREEDING**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30, 2007 - Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns today announced that \$6 million has been awarded to the University of California - Davis to improve breeding technologies for conifer trees. Application of genomic-based breeding technologies will significantly reduce the breeding cycle time and the cost of extensive field evaluations at large, long-term test plantations.

"Forests are important to our way of life and the earth's ecology," Johanns said. "Our commitment to the health and longevity of the forests is renewed with each investment in the next generation of research and people to care for the next generation of forest trees."

The Conifer Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) brings genomic-based breeding to major industry cooperative breeding programs within five years to develop a comprehensive undergraduate and graduate curriculum in modern plant breeding technologies to train the next generation of tree breeders. The program also will develop a comprehensive extension program to train existing tree breeders in the use of genomic-based approaches to tree breeding.

The Conifer CAP is a unique collaborative effort in agriculture and forestry that brings together basic researchers and applied tree breeders in a combined research, education, and extension mission.

The award is administered by the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) and the Forest Service to build on 50 years of collected forest genetics research to advance the development and application of genomic-based breeding in forest trees. More information about the Conifer CAP project can be found on the Conifer Translational Genomics Network Web site at <http://www.pinegenome.org/ctgn> .

CSREES advances knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities by supporting research, education and extension programs in the Land-Grant University System. For more information, visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov>.

Established in 1905, the U.S. Forest Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that serves the public by managing public lands in national forests and grasslands, conducting research and development, and working with state and private interests on natural resource issues. Visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/> for more information.

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