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The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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*Putting Science to Work for Society
Protecting Agriculture, Public Health, and the Environment*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Receives Major Award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for Establishment of a “Northeast Regional Center for Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases” in partnership with Cornell University, Columbia University, and the New York State Department of Health.

New Haven, CT - The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) announced today that CAES in collaboration with Cornell University, Columbia University, Fordham University and the New York and Connecticut State Departments of Health have been awarded a 5 year, \$10 million dollar grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to establish a “Northeast Regional Center for Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases”. This is one of four regional centers in the United States that will address emerging and exotic vector-borne diseases, like Zika. The goals of the Northeast Center will be to (1) to develop and evaluate more effective vector-borne disease prevention and control tools and methods necessary to anticipate and respond to disease outbreaks, (2) train a cadre of public health entomologists with the knowledge and skills required to rapidly detect, prevent and respond to vector-borne disease threats in the United States, and (3) build effective collaborations between academic communities and public health organizations at federal, state, and local levels for vector borne disease surveillance, response and prevention. The Center will focus its research efforts on mosquito and tick transmitted diseases of major concern to the region including West Nile virus, eastern equine encephalitis, Lyme disease, babesiosis and Powassan virus, and emerging and

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exotic vector-borne diseases such as Zika, dengue, chikungunya and heartland viruses. Scientists will also study the effects of climate change on mosquitoes and ticks currently experiencing range expansion in the northeast in an attempt to better assess and predict current and future human risk of infection with vector borne-pathogens. “We are extremely fortunate and delighted to have received this award with Cornell University and our other partners,” said Dr. Theodore Andreadis, Director of The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and Co-Principal Investigator.” This funding will be used to expand our current State-supported research and surveillance programs on ticks and mosquitoes and allow our highly skilled multidisciplinary team of scientists to address some of the most pressing issues with new knowledge, and further increase our capacity to respond to current and future threats from vector-borne diseases in the region with appropriate and timely local public health action.”

The CDC awarded four \$10 million grants. The recipients were the University of Florida, the University of Texas–Galveston and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, each of which will form their own Vector Borne Disease Regional Centers for Excellence. The funding is part of \$184 million awarded by the CDC to states, territories, local jurisdictions and universities to support efforts to fight Zika virus and other vector-borne diseases.

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