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C O M M U N I C A T I O N S

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Vegetable Food Safety Grant Awarded to CSU Professor

Fort Collins, CO—Dr. Lawrence Goodridge, an Assistant Professor at the Center for Meat Safety and Quality at Colorado State University (CSU), has been awarded a \$1.7 million national grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for research, education and outreach efforts to improve food safety. The funding will be used to develop an integrated system to monitor agricultural water used in vegetable production for the presence of harmful, illness-inducing food-borne pathogens.

In addition to this recently funded project, Dr. Goodridge's research group focuses on a host of other problems related to the production of safe food including characterization of antibiotic and sanitizer resistance in bacteria isolated from food production animals, research on non-thermal food processing methods for minimally processed foods, and the development of rapid, simple to use, diagnostics to test foods for the presence of food-borne pathogens.

As part of this research, SpectraDigital Corporation's (SDC) multi-angle light scattering-based assay, *SpectraPoint*, will be used to identify the presence of food-borne pathogens. SpectraPoint provides a means for rapidly determining the presence or absence of pathogens in an assay format that can be used in the field.

SDC is a Canadian company with a U.S. subsidiary, SpectraDigital Inc., in Fort Collins, CO. SDC develops health-care solutions for use in low resource settings and has developed diagnostics for TB and malaria and a rapid low-cost test to determine the most efficacious treatment of AIDS patients.

Dr. Goodridge stated that recent outbreaks of food-borne illnesses have been associated with consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

“Because these foods are often consumed raw, steps taken by the producers to reduce the pathogens via best practices and surveillance from farm-to-fork will reduce the presence of food-borne pathogens and promote consumer confidence, said Dr. Goodridge. This research will lead to the development of rapid tests for food-borne bacteria such as *Escherichia coli* O157 and *Salmonella* spp. as these tests will be designed to be used on the farm, vegetable processing facilities, and at points of distribution.”

Ed King, President of SpectraDigital Inc., added “We are very pleased to be a part of Dr. Goodridge's larger project. SDC is committed to contributing to the solution to enhance food safety by developing innovative low-cost tests that benefit the food producers, food distributors, and ultimately, the consumer.”