

## NEWS RELEASE



Recipients of the NIH grant  
Dr. Chris Davies and Dr. Ken White

### USU Scientists Awarded Generous NIH Grant

Utah State University scientists Chris Davies and Ken White have received a \$1,073,296 award from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institutes of Health (NIH) to continue their study of the interactions between the fetal and maternal tissues at the placental interface in cattle.

The grant will fund research facilitating a better understanding of the cause of human pregnancy failure that results from placental incompatibility between the mother and fetus using “cloned” cattle pregnancies as a model of this condition.

White says that this research focuses on cloned embryos since they have an extremely high incidence of pregnancy failure due to placental inadequacies, which provides an excellent model for immune-mediated placental failure in humans.

“This award is a tremendous boost to our cloning research efforts and will provide an opportunity to use our research model to better understand the underlying causes of this type of pregnancy failure in humans,” says White, who co-leads the project. “A better understanding of the specific mechanisms that lead to the high incidence of placental problems that result in pregnancy failure will be a huge breakthrough in this area.”

Widely recognized as an expert on cattle cloning, Dr. White worked with the team that cloned the first mule here at USU in collaboration with the University of Idaho. He is currently Department Head of the Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences Department and Associate Director for Research, Center for Integrated BioSystems.

As the 2006 recipient of the *J. Christian Herr Award* for “outstanding achievements in basic or applied research in reproductive immunology,” Dr. Davies brings dual experience as both a veterinarian and reproductive immunologist to the research team. He joined USU’s Center for Integrated BioSystems and Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences Department in 2007.

Collaboration between the College of Agriculture, Center for Integrated BioSystems, Department of Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences, and the Utah Ag Experiment Station and strong support from J.R. Simplot Company make this research possible.

“This NIH grant will permit us to do some exciting things that we’ve wanted to do for a long time” said Davies.

The NICHD/NIH sponsors research on development before and after birth; maternal, child, and family health; reproductive biology and population issues; and medical rehabilitation.



Cows on the USU Dairy Farm, Wellsville Utah.  
(Photo by Gary Neuenswander.)

***Related links:***

- [USU Center for Integrated BioSystems](#)
- [USU Department of Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences](#)
- [Utah Ag Experiment Station](#)
- [USU College of Agriculture](#)
- [National Institute of Child Health and Human Development \(NICHD\)](#)
- [J.R. Simplot Company](#)

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