WIFSS Receives Federal Training Grant to Protect California Food

The Western Institute for Food Safety and Security (WIFSS) received a two-year, $4.7 million dollar grant August 23.

The grant will support the development and delivery of training programs aimed at helping personnel involved in food production systems to prevent, recognize, and deal with potential terrorist acts directed at the nation’s food supply.

UC Davis is the focus of the training program, and expects to train people in the food industry to ensure the safety of our food systems. The training grant expands existing programs currently offered through WIFSS as well as UC Cooperative Extension, University Extension and other campus academic programs, and is expected to impact more than one million front-line personnel.

During the first year of the grant, the focus of the training program will be to inventory existing programs, identify industry-specific terrorist hazards and threats, communicate risks to industry leaders, and identify and coordinate personnel considered to be in the best position for identifying or responding to possible terrorist actions.

During the later part of the program, regional and national workshops and conferences will be held, communications systems will be improved, and the nation’s level of preparedness in the area of agricultural bioterrorism defense will be assessed.

One of the most effective strategies for achieving this goal is to have food industry employees informed and actively participating in protection strategies."

Dr. Gillespie says the training grant enables the university and its partners to train people in the food industry to anticipate, prevent and respond to harmful acts directed at food systems—from the farm to the consumer.

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