

# AgKnowledge

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## AGRICULTURE IN IDAHO

IDAHO FOOD MANUFACTURING ACCOUNTS DIRECTLY FOR 16,000 JOBS AND \$8.5 BILLION IN SALES.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1c08Fs6>

## Study aims to help small and medium-sized Idaho farms supply local markets

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A NEW UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO STUDY focuses on developing strategies to help Idaho producers satisfy the growing interest in locally produced foods and small farms.

The UI team of economists and researchers will survey restaurants and grocery stores to estimate market size for locally produced vegetable and livestock products.

The team also will assess where food producers are located and how they could work together to get products to market. The information can help small and medium-sized producers find ways to tap into and supply markets to promote local businesses.

The UI Extension Small Farms Program will use the research findings to develop educational materials and training focused on small and medium-sized farm operators.

Workshops are planned to promote collaboration among community, regional and state economic development professionals, producers, communities and others. The project is funded by a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to the UI Office of Community Partnerships.

## Ochratoxin in food focus of national study

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UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO PROFESSOR DOJIN RYU is leading a national study of ochratoxin, a fungal toxin, which can contaminate many different kinds of moldy foods.

Presenting food safety issues similar to aflatoxin, which can contaminate peanuts and corn, ochratoxin is produced by a fungus. Unlike aflatoxin, ochratoxin is not regulated by the United States.

The researchers will sample foods to determine whether ochratoxin is present in foods, which foods and if concentrations pose a risk. A faculty member of the School of Food Science operated by UI and Washington State University, Ryu said the five-year study is in its second year of sampling foods.

The team includes researchers from The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Illinois Institute of Technology, University of Nebraska,

North Dakota State University and Michigan State University.

The \$1.5 million study includes two years of sampling to allow researchers to determine if ochratoxins are present in foods, and whether they present food safety risks to consumers. According to Ryu, the diverse growth characteristics of the toxigenic fungi means it can be found in many foods.

A possible human carcinogen, ochratoxin has been found in an exceptionally wide variety of agricultural commodities worldwide including cereal grains, nuts, dried fruits, spices, meat, milk, and many processed foods made from these commodities including wine, beer, infant formula and baby foods.

## Renovated building welcomes home CALS' largest department

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THE MARGARET RITCHIE SCHOOL OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES is home again, settling into the Niccolls Building after a \$2.8 million renovation to improve the building's heating, air, and ventilation system and update the foods lab and child development lab.

The school is the largest unit of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, with nearly 456 undergraduates enrolled in fall semester.

The renovations were funded by private donations, state funding, and funding from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. The work began immediately after spring semester ended and was on a tight timeline.

The work on the foods lab will enhance educational opportunities for nutrition and dietetics majors. The child development laboratory provides educational opportunities for child development majors.

The Niccolls building was completed in 1951 and the renovations were the first major work on the building in its history. It also provides classroom space for other colleges.

The school continues to seek support from donors to help equip the renovated building. "The students are excited to use the lab," said Katie Miner, who teaches food and nutrition classes in the new foods lab. "We are eager to educate our students using the latest equipment to prepare them for their careers. The renovation exceeded our expectations."