

University of Iowa News Release

Sept. 1, 2006

### **New Zealand Ambassador To Visit UI**



New Zealand's Ambassador to the United States Roy Ferguson will visit the University of Iowa Tuesday, Sept. 5, meeting with UI leaders and touring key research facilities at the Oakdale Research Park and UI Hospitals and Clinics.

Ferguson is touring the UI as part of a statewide tour sponsored by the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) and in support of an ongoing relationship established to advance life science collaboration opportunities between the State of Iowa and New Zealand.

Ferguson's tour begins at 2 p.m. at the Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing (CBB) at the Oakdale Research Park, 2501 Crosspark Road. He will meet with CBB Director Mani Subramanian and CBB Director of Operations Marvin Scher. Next, Ferguson will tour the National Advanced Driving Simulator (NADS), 2401 Oakdale Blvd. at 3:15 p.m. with Karim Abdel Malek, NADS director and UI professor of biomedical engineering.

The tour continues to the Radiology Lab at UI Hospitals and Clinics for a meeting with Professor Eric Hoffman at approximately 4:40 p.m. Hoffman's work with researchers from the University of Auckland in New Zealand uses computed tomography (CT) imaging and image analysis to assess lung diseases.

There will be a reception for Ferguson in the atrium of the UI's Medical Education Research Building from 5:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., when he will meet with Meredith Hay, vice president for research at the UI. He will meet privately with UI Interim President Gary Fethke later that evening.

Marcia Rogers, president of Management Resource Group in Hiawatha and IDED Board member, is organizing the visit. She says the purpose of the ambassador's trip is to endorse the Iowa/New Zealand biotechnology collaboration and consider expanding it to include the information technology field and exchanges between educational institutions. Ferguson's delegation includes his chief scientific officer, a business development manager and chief education officer who will help assess the possibilities for collaboration.

Iowa's biotechnology relationship with New Zealand formally began in 2003 when Rogers, herself a former New Zealand resident, met with Dr. Keith Steele, then CEO of New Zealand's Crown Research Institute, to discuss joint interests. Later, Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack and IDED expanded the relationship, leading delegations of leaders from Iowa and New Zealand to visit research universities and biotechnology companies in both countries. A memorandum of cooperation to formalize life science collaboration was signed in June 2005. These ongoing activities have resulted in more than 25 business transactions; several more direct contacts have been established between Iowa and New Zealand biotechnology companies, Rogers said.

Before coming to the UI Tuesday afternoon, the ambassador will meet with the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce. Following the UI stop, he will go to Iowa State University on Wednesday and later in the day meet with IDED Director Mike Blouin and Iowa Department of Education officials in Des Moines. Iowa First Lady Christie Vilsack will host a dinner for Iowans with New Zealand ties Wednesday evening, followed by a breakfast sponsored by the Greater Des Moines Partnership on Thursday.

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