

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

REGENTS COMMUNICATION

Approved by the Regents
November 15, 2007

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Research Agreement between the University
of Michigan and the Mousetrap Foundation

Action Requested: Authorization to enter into Agreement

Preamble:

A Statutory conflict of interest situation was identified by the Division of Research Development and Administration while reviewing the Proposal Approval Form that then triggered a review by the OVPR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. A plan for management of the possible risks associated with the conflicts of interest was then developed by the Committee and agreed to by the parties involved.

Background:

The proposed research agreement ("Agreement") falls under the State of Michigan Conflict of Interest Statute because Dr. Rosina Bierbaum is both an employee of the University of Michigan ("University") and a board member of Mousetrap Foundation. The law permits such an Agreement provided it is disclosed to the executive officers and approved in advance by a 2/3 vote of the Regents of the University of Michigan.

Nature of the Agreement:

This agreement will provide support for the Placencia Lagoon Project. The goals of the project are: (1) assess water quality in two tributaries of the Placencia Lagoon basin that receive shrimp farm effluent over the course of the wet season (May-November); (2) apply active and passive stable isotope tracking techniques to assess shrimp farm nitrogen and carbon in these two tributaries and beyond; and (3) to investigate pond management and design alternatives that would both improve effluent quality and the financial integrity of shrimp farming operations in the Placencia basin.

Agreement Terms:

The terms of the proposed Agreement are acceptable and conform to University policy. The amount of the award to the University is \$15,000. The period of performance is May 1, 2007 to April 30, 2008.

Impact of the Agreement:

Given the controversy surrounding the shrimp farming in Placencia Lagoon and throughout the world, site specific analysis such as this study are necessary to determine the relative contribution of shrimp farming, effluent among myriad sources of nitrogen. Nitrogen is considered to be the primary limiting factor in oligotrophic tropical streams and lagoons, wherein relatively small increases can cause significant negative impacts. This study will contribute to the better understanding of the aquaculture component of the overall nitrogen input to the lagoon.

Recommendation:

This matter has been reviewed and approved by the OVPR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. In light of the disclosure made in this document and our finding that the Agreement was negotiated in conformance with standard University practices, I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the University entering into this Agreement with the Mousetrap Foundation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen R. Forrest". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Stephen R. Forrest
Vice President for Research

November 2007