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Land O'Lakes Endows Chair at Purdue University

February 18, 2013 -- Purdue University agricultural economics professor Allan Gray has been named the newly created Land O'Lakes Chair in Food and Agribusiness at Purdue University.

The Land O'Lakes Foundation's commitment to fund the chair was secured through Purdue's Faculty Excellence Challenge Match program. The initiative is designed to endow new professorships through private gifts from \$750,000 to \$1 million that are matched dollar for dollar. The foundation will donate \$750,000, with Purdue matching that amount.

Gray's position at Purdue was previously known as the Agricultural Chair of Excellence in Engagement. Purdue's Board of Trustees ratified the name change Feb. 8 to reflect the Land O'Lakes donation. In his engagement role with Purdue, Gray, director of the Center for Food and Agricultural Business, works with agribusinesses and cooperatives such as Land O'Lakes in designing and delivering management development programs, specifically in business strategy, for agribusiness industries. He has been involved with the center for 13 years and led it for the last six.

Arden Hills, Minn.-based Land O'Lakes Foundation said it is creating the endowed chair because it is committed to supporting leading agriculture education institutions that are preparing students and professionals for successful careers in a growing industry that must be poised to feed a growing global population.

"We are proud to partner with Purdue University to support the College of Agriculture, and specifically the Center for Food and Agricultural Business," said Lydia Botham, executive director of Land O'Lakes Foundation. "Over the past few years, Dr. Gray has shared insights with our employees and members about the opportunities that exist for ag industry growth and the importance of tapping innovation and technology to seize these opportunities." Jay Akridge, Glenn W. Sample Dean of Purdue Agriculture, said the endowed chair will enhance Gray's research and engagement program focused on issues facing the agribusiness industry.

"We are very excited about this investment by one of the world's largest member-owned cooperatives in the College of Agriculture's food and agribusiness management program," he said.

Akridge said Gray was highly deserving of the appointment. "Dr. Gray is a distinguished educator and researcher and is a key leader in the agribusiness community locally, nationally and internationally," he said.