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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 22, 2008
**West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory
 Opens at UT Martin**

MARTIN, Tenn. – Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture Ken Givens joined University of Tennessee at Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes and other state and local officials today to dedicate the new West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory on the UT Martin campus. The facility will provide a variety of services in support of animal disease diagnosis and regulatory activities.



“The new West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory is a prime example of how the Agricultural Enhancement Program is making a positive difference for our state,” said Gov. Phil Bredesen, who was represented by Givens at the dedication. “I’m proud to join the Department of Agriculture in supporting this facility, which for the first time will make critical disease diagnostic and reporting services readily accessible to West Tennessee veterinarians, farmers and pet owners.”

“I want to commend UT Martin for delivering on a promise to operate a first-class facility with first-class service,” said Givens. “This is a great day for Tennessee agriculture and particularly for the livestock industry in West Tennessee. Not only will this facility function as an integral part of a statewide animal disease network, but it will help to further diversify and support the development of our livestock industry in West Tennessee.”

The partnership between the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and UT Martin

was made possible by the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program, established in 2005 by Bredesen and supported by the Tennessee General Assembly. The goal of the TAEP is to help improve animal health and livestock production and to encourage farm diversification in Tennessee.

The laboratory opening follows an announcement in fall 2006 of a partnership between the TDA and UT Martin to improve cattle management and health in West Tennessee with a mobile, high-tech trailer funded by the TAEP that is being used as a tool to educate and demonstrate proper cattle management and care. In fiscal year 2006, a total of \$750,000 from TAEP funded renovations and equipment for the new laboratory.

University of Tennessee President John Petersen was represented by Dr. Joseph DiPietro, UT vice president for agriculture.

“With the establishment of the West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab at UT Martin, each region of the state is now equipped to identify and monitor animal health concerns such as foreign animal disease, herd disease outbreaks, secure the safety of the food supply, maximize animal health and assure public health,” said DiPietro. “The lab will also further the commitment to increased communication among the public, producers and veterinarians in West Tennessee.”

The West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory will function as a satellite facility of C.E. Kord Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory operated by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture in Nashville. Another regional laboratory operating independently is located at University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine in Knoxville.

The 2,200 sq. ft. facility will provide post-mortem tissue collection services only. Samples will be shipped overnight to Kord laboratory, where all definitive diagnoses will be made by state veterinary pathologists. Veterinarians, producers and West Tennessee residents will be able to submit animals to the facility for necropsies.

“This is a great example of our continuing partnership with the state to ensure an increased level of special services to those within our region,” said Chancellor Rakes. “We are fortunate to have this unique laboratory facility located in West Tennessee.”

For more information about the West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, contact Dr. Janet Bailey, facilities manager, at 731-881-1071.

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Click image for larger version.

Caption: MARTIN, Tenn, May 22, 2008 – WEST TENNESSEE ANIMAL DISEASE DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY DEDICATION – Attending the West Tennessee Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory dedication on the University of Tennessee at Martin campus, May 22, are, from left, Dr. Jim Byford, UT Martin

College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences dean; Dr. Ronald Wilson, state veterinarian; Dr. Joseph DiPietro, University of Tennessee vice president for agriculture; Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture Ken Givens; UT Martin Chancellor Tom Rakes; Tennessee Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture Terry Oliver; and Dr. Jerry Gresham, UT Martin Department of Agriculture chair. The laboratory, a partnership between the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and UT Martin, was made possible by the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program. The facility will provide a variety of services in support of animal disease diagnosis and regulatory activities

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