

Homeland Security Offers \$100K

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has launched a \$100,000 prize competition to reward innovative ideas that help to protect the nation's animal agriculture industry by leveraging resources at the [National Bio and Agro-defense Facility](#), or NBAF.

The [Think and Do challenge](#) was launched Sept. 30 and ideas will be accepted through Nov. 30. The Department of Homeland Security is conducting the competition through its Science and Technology directorate.

"We are excited to kick this off," said Marty Vanier, the director of partnership development for NBAF. "It is all part of the Department of Homeland Security wanting to create an entirely new way of doing business when it comes to performing research. It represents a spirit of collaboration, cooperation and building relationships."

Any U.S. citizen, permanent resident or company registered to do business in the United States is eligible to submit ideas. Vanier said the total prize pool of \$100,000 may be shared by several winning ideas, or potentially won by a single winning idea. The minimum award will be \$15,000.

"I think it's a great opportunity for groups on campus or groups in the community to come forward with their ideas with respect to how they might work with NBAF," she said. "It's a great opportunity even for small companies to share their ideas with respect to technology they think might be useful to NBAF."

NBAF is expected to open in 2022 as a state-of-the-art biocontainment laboratory to study diseases that threaten America's animal agriculture industry and public health. It will be located adjacent to the north end of the Kansas State University campus, and will replace an aging facility currently at Plum Island, New York.

Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Undersecretary Reginald Brothers said the Think and Do competition is a catalyst for developing a sound plan and smart strategy to enable the new laboratory to leverage and build upon existing resources and capabilities to better protect the nation's livestock and public health.

Vanier noted that such competitions are not unusual since the U.S. government passed the America COMPETES Act of 2007. The law allows the government to offer awards for competitions that promote an investment in research and development.

Technology competitions shake the tree for new ideas, but also will help to establish a spirit of cooperation and partnerships for NBAF, Vanier said.

Contest rules and more information about the Think and Do challenge are available at dhs.gov/nbafchallenge.

