

EAST LANSING, Mich. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has awarded 17 grants totaling \$10.4 million for university research projects designed to boost food safety. Oklahoma State University received \$543,000. Deputy Agriculture Secretary Kathleen Merrigan said the funds are being divided among universities in 13 states. She made the announcement during a visit to Michigan State University, a recipient of three grants. One of the studies there will look for better ways to prevent harmful pathogens from contaminating packages of ready-to-eat, fresh-cut produce. The grants were made through the National Integrated Food Safety Initiative, which deals with food safety issues from the farm up to preparation.