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INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

What is GENeS?

The Genetic Expert News Service (GENeS) is a new science communications initiative that provides rapid access to scientific expertise on the latest news on genetics and biotechnology. GENeS' objective is for media debates to be informed by accurate, evidence-based information. The service covers any topic where genetics plays a role, be it agricultural, environmental, human or medical.

"GENeS provides a simple and effective way for researchers to serve as a resource for journalists covering genetics and biotechnology. Engagement by scientists helps ensure that policy decisions are based on evidence, not misinformation." -- Pamela Ronald, Professor, University of California, Davis

How does GENeS work with researchers?

We aim to provide news reporters with scientific expertise at the time they are on a story. By having a database of contacts from research institutions across North America who have volunteered to help, GENeS works to connect reporters with the scientific community in three different ways:

1) *Before News Breaks*

Like journalists, our staff members scour through embargoed material from scientific journals and organizations. When a story looks like it needs broader scientific context or analysis we reach out to researchers with relevant expertise and ask for their reaction. Gathered over a number of days, this reaction is sent directly to journalists under embargo to use in their reporting.

2) *After News Breaks*

Not all news can be predicted, like disease outbreaks, major policy decisions or newspaper investigations. When these stories hit the headlines and the media is hungry for material, we ask researchers on our books if they can drop everything and provide their immediate reaction.

3) *Individual Inquiries*

GENeS also acts as a matchmaking service for reporters who need an expert contact, and this service is also available to policymakers and any organization engaging in debates around genetics.

Only staff members have access to the database and privacy is taken seriously. No information is given out without explicit consent from researchers. The service is free for reporters to use and no money is taken or received by contacts on GENeS' database.

How much commitment does this mean for you?

As much as you'd like. We understand that scientists have a full platter of responsibilities and may be too busy to help. Responding to requests is completely voluntary and we rely on the goodwill of researchers to achieve our aims. We try to keep detailed records so that we only make contact when appropriate, but if you receive a request that is not in your area of expertise, please let us know.

Where does the funding for GENeS come from?

GENeS is the co-project of the non-profit Genetic Literacy Project (GLP) and the Institute for Food and Agricultural Literacy (IFAL) at the World Food Center, University of California, Davis. GLP funding is strictly from foundations, specifically the John Templeton Foundation, the Searle Freedom Trust and the Winkler Family Trust. UC Davis funding comes directly from the Chancellor's office. GENeS has complete independence from its funders, and no position on any issue or technology. We act like a press office but without the constraints of protecting or advancing the public profile of an institution.