

Short list announced for \$500M lab

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Sites in Kansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Texas and North Carolina are being considered as the possible site of a \$500 million U.S. Homeland Security research lab.

A decision regarding the location of the new lab is expected to be made in the fall of 2008.

Environmental impact studies, as well as discussions with the public, will be conducted at the proposed sites ahead of the decision, the San Antonio Express News reported Thursday.

The new Homeland Security lab will focus on studying agricultural diseases that could infect the nation's food supply or spread from livestock to humans if they were accidentally imported or intentionally released by terrorists.

The 520,000 square-foot lab is being created to replace the Plum Island facility off Long Island, N.Y., which has operated since 1954 and is limited to studying foot-and-mouth disease.

U.S. officials said the new facility could have an annual budget of \$100 million and employ 250 to 350 people, including scientists and support staff.

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