



## **Dr. Cramer, Dr. Hood attend alternative crops conference, present forum**

Dec. 9, 2008 -- Dr. Carole L. Cramer, executive director, Arkansas Biosciences Institute at Arkansas State University, and Dr. Elizabeth Hood, Distinguished Professor of Agriculture and president and CEO of Infinite Enzymes, recently attended the Planting Seeds for the Future: West Tennessee Alternative Crops Conference at the University of Memphis.

Dr. Cramer and Dr. Hood presented the forum on "Plants as Biofactories: New Crops with Novel Output Traits." This conference was based on alternative or "new" crops that can be used in high-value food, health and industrial applications. Farmers, agriculture and bio-products professionals, technology developers, educators, researchers, government officials and entrepreneurs gathered to explore some of the non-traditional crops and how they could be utilized and explore the challenges of developing business around these "new" crops.

Hood's company, Infinite Enzymes, was both a sponsor and participant in the partnering forum held the first night of the conference. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture and the Memphis Bioworks Foundation were the conference sponsors. The Memphis Bioworks Foundation is comprised of AgBioworks and BioDimensions, and is dedicated to developing new agricultural technologies and processing, resulting in a stronger bioeconomy in the Mississippi Delta, impacting both workforce development and the economy.

Together, AgBioworks and BioDimensions are developing a strategic plan for the 83-county Mississippi Delta region that encompasses the regions of Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee to help align public and private funding, create opportunities for farmers, improve the environment, and increase green jobs.

Hood's work in developing plant-made enzymes for cellulosic biomass conversion has been awarded a \$1.845 million grant by the U.S. Department of Energy, the Wal-Mart Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation, and is taking place at the Arkansas Biosciences Institute at Arkansas State University. For more information on ABI, contact Dr. Carole Cramer, executive director, (870) 972-2025, e-mail [ccramer@astate.edu](mailto:ccramer@astate.edu), or visit <http://abi.astate.edu/>.