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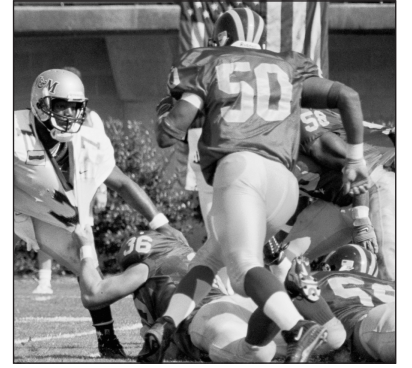
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UD soil institute helps farmers with research

BY SHARI ABRAMSON
Staff Reporter

The university will receive \$120,000 in federal funding to help establish the Institute of Soil and Environmental Quality.

Brian Selander, communication director for Sen. Thomas R. Carper, D-Del., said the university will acquire this money through the fiscal year 2002 Agriculture Appropriations Bill, which was announced Wednesday.

Selander said Delaware's Congressional Delegation secured the money for agricultural research to help the state's farmers find solutions to environmental and soil quality issues.

He said one way to better the environmental quality in the state is to improve scientific knowledge and research capabilities.

"The University of Delaware is already the leader in so many fields," he said. "This money helps ensure that it stays in the ranks of the top research institutes in soil and environmental quality in the country."

Selander said the most important goal is improving the state's agricultural industry and environment.

"The Institute of Soil and Environmental Quality is a step toward that goal, along with the \$290,000 secured for the Claude E. Phillips Herbarium at Delaware State University," he said.

Selander said Delaware farmers have many problems that these research institutes can help solve. They can also help the future of the state's agricultural industry and environmental quality, he said.

Lisa Borin, legislative assistant for Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del., said the research done at the institute will be disseminated throughout the country.

"We're very excited to have this bill passed since we have been trying for over two years to get this money," she said. "This bill is not

only exciting for the state of Delaware but for the entire country as well.

"There are no disadvantages to this bill."

Borin said one of the projects the institute will focus on is non-point surface pollution of surface waters due to excess nutrients, such as nitrites, in the ground.

"This issue has come up time and time again and the soil institute would help in solving this difficult problem," she said. "If we are going to sustain agricultural productivity, we need to reduce this pollution."

She said the state also has problems with excessive phosphorous levels caused by poultry production and its impact on area local waterways.

"The research done at this institute will bring together animal scientists, soil scientists, hydrologists and environmental engineers to try and tackle these problems along with the general drought issues in agriculture," she said.

Elizabeth Brealy Wenk, spokeswoman for Rep. Michael N. Castle, R-Del., said Castle worked with Carper and Biden to secure the funding.

"There is a large agricultural community in the state, especially in southern Delaware, and it plays a huge role," she said.

Brealy Wenk said there is a nutrient imbalance in the ground and harmful substances such as sewage have tainted the water.

"We wanted to bring an institute together under one organization and we thought, what better place to have this than at UD," she said. "We need to know how to deal with these problems."

Selander said the bill still needs to be signed by President George W. Bush before the university will receive the \$120,000.

"I don't know when UD will get the money, but the bill is almost certain to pass," he said.