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## **4-H Unveils Online Ag Learning System at *Generation: Ag* Summit**

*Newly Sworn-in USDA Chief Scientist Provides Keynote Address*

CHEVY CHASE, MD— (June 23, 2009) A week ago, more than 150 of the nation's leaders in the field of agriculture gathered in St. Louis to discuss the challenges and opportunities involved in developing America's future ag industry workforce. The *Generation: Ag* Summit, hosted jointly by National 4-H Council, DuPont and Monsanto, brought together the top minds in agribusiness and higher education to accelerate partnerships and pose solutions to drive young people to pursue college degrees and professional opportunities in the agricultural sciences.

In response to the nation's ag workforce development dilemma, 4-H is crafting a new customizable, online learning system called *Project Pathways*. Created to spark early youth interest in the ag sciences, *Project Pathways* will feature a wide variety of hands-on topics and activities from genetic engineering, agro-robotics and sustainable agriculture to product marketing, plant science, animal science and ag communications. An exciting new part of 4-H's existing research-based, Ag Science programming, *Project Pathways*, will be developed by the scientists and educators within America's unique land-grant university system.

"With over a century of experience in sparking youth interest in science, 4-H is strategically positioned to help agribusiness address workforce development issues by engaging the six million youth who actively participate in 4-H," said Donald T. Floyd, Jr., National 4-H Council president and CEO. "Inventive 4-H out-of-school programming like *Project Pathways* will allow youth to be exposed to and engage in the sciences earlier, which has been shown to motivate youth to pursue a career in the sciences as adults."

"*Project Pathways* will be designed to accommodate, inspire and empower a wide variety of learners," said Dr. Bob Horton, Professor of Educational Design at The Ohio State University, and chief architect of the *Project Pathways* initiative. "This is the first time that the efforts of industry, academia and youth development are combining to create a robust curriculum that blends the latest interactive online programming with offline hands-on work alongside passionate expert mentors."

In addition to the excitement generated by the launch of *Project Pathways*, attendees of the *Generation: Ag* Summit were treated to the very first public remarks of Dr. Rajiv Shah, Under Secretary of Research, Education and Economics (REE) and Chief Scientist at the US Department of Agriculture, who provided the keynote address. Dr. Shah spoke about the importance of science to the future of America's food and agriculture system, and the critical role that 4-H is playing in attracting a new generation of young innovators to the industry.

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“Science education is a vitally important priority for our nation,” said Rajiv J. Shah, M.D., Under Secretary of Research, Education and Economics (REE) and Chief Scientist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. “I applaud 4-H for its work to develop the next generation of agriculturally literate youth who will go on to become our country’s future innovative scientific minds.”

The *Generation: Ag* Summit took place on June 10<sup>th</sup> at the Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

**About 4-H:**

4-H is a community of six million young people across America learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of National 4-H Headquarters (USDA). The 4-H programs are implemented by the 106 Land Grant Universities and the Cooperative Extension System through their 3,100 local Extension offices across the country. Learn more about 4-H at [www.4-h.org](http://www.4-h.org).

*Project Pathways* is part of 4-H’s *One Million New Scientists. One Million New Ideas.*<sup>TM</sup> campaign, with a bold goal of attracting one million new youth to science, engineering and technology programs by the year 2013.

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To request an interview or program brochure about *Project Pathways* contact:  
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