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Harvey C. Hoch named chair of Cornell's Plant Pathology Department at Geneva

By Joe Ogrodnick

GENEVA, NY: Harvey C. Hoch has been appointed chairman of the plant pathology department at Cornell's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY. He replaces outgoing chairman Thomas J. Burr, who was named the new director of the Station.

"I look forward to working with Dr. Hoch as the new chair of plant pathology," said Burr. "Harvey is known worldwide for his outstanding research accomplishments and we are fortunate to have a person of his caliber in the position. His strong work ethic, communication skills and meticulous nature will make him an excellent chair."

Hoch's current research emphasizes aspects of the cell biology of plant pathogenic fungi, particularly the mechanisms by which these fungi use leaf surface characteristics (topological and chemical) to sense the right time and place to infect the host. Many of these studies incorporate nano- and micro-fabrication technologies to fabricate intricate tools and surface topographies to help address questions regarding fungal cell biology.

Similar research approaches are being used in studies with bacteria that cause disease of grape and other plants. In these studies, artificial xylem vessels (the water conduits of plants where the bacteria live) are being fabricated and used to determine how these bacteria migrate against the flow of the xylem sap to colonize regions of the plant upstream, where they develop biofilms that plug the vessels and cause disease. Much of the nanofabrication research is being conducted in conjunction with the Nanobiotechnology Center at Cornell University.

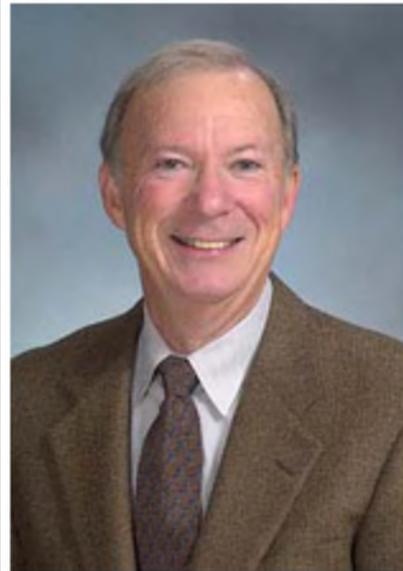
"This will be an interesting and challenging change for me," Hoch said. "I could not ask for a more congenial and cooperative group with which to work. With their support, I am confident the department will continue to be productive and serve New York agriculture and the college well."

Hoch is a member of the American Phytopathological Society (APS), Mycological Society of America, and the American Society for Cell Biology. Along with Richard Staples, he was a co-recipient of the 1994 Ruth Allen Award given by the APS in recognition of his contributions toward understanding the biology of rust fungi, particularly how these fungal pathogens sense surface signals present on host leaves that trigger appressoria development. Hoch was elected a Fellow of the APS in 2002.

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Harvey C. Hoch

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