

New CSET award

The Center for Sustainable Environmental Technologies (CSET) at Iowa State University was recently awarded \$1,999,724 by USDA for biomass research. The funds are part of USDA and the Department of Energy's (DOE) Biomass Research and Development Initiative. The project will address critical needs for corn stover feedstock development through an integrated multidisciplinary approach. The collaborators include the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the USDA Dairy Forage Research Center, the USDA Corn Insect and Crop Genetics Research Unit and the World Resources Institute, with industry partners John Deere and Genencor International. Research teams are focused on plant breeding and crop physiology, harvest and storage technologies, and systems evaluation and integration. The goal is to develop productive, efficient, and sustainable strategies for corn stover biomass as a primary feedstock for the bioeconomy of the 21st century, while significantly improving the rural agro-industrial economy. Only 19 projects out of 400 applications were selected for funding. The overall objectives of the project are to:

- 1) develop innovative harvesting and storage technologies to efficiently and economically move corn stover from the field to the factory gate with optimal physical and chemical properties required by biomass conversion processes;
- 2) identify genetic varieties of maize with specific properties attractive for biobased industries and initiate a breeding program to enhance those properties; and
- 3) evaluate and optimize these systems for rural economic and environmental sustainability.