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FAPC graduate student receives top honors during spring graduation

(Stillwater, Okla. – June 7, 2010) Oklahoma State University honored a Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center graduate student with the spring 2010 Graduate Research Excellence Award.

Kalpana Kushwaha, food science major in the department of animal science, was recognized during the OSU Graduate College Commencement Ceremony on May 7, 2010, for her research skills and accomplishments. She received a letter of commendation from OSU President Burn Hargis and a commemorative plaque from the Vice President for Research.

“I am very excited and honored to receive this award, which recognizes graduate students for their outstanding research accomplishments,” Kushwaha said.

All OSU departments and interdepartmental programs offering graduate programs were eligible to nominate students for this award.

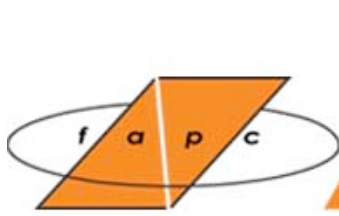
“The purpose of this program is to recognize graduate students for their outstanding research accomplishments as reflected in their thesis or dissertation,” according to the OSU Graduate Research Excellence Awards selection committee.

In addition to the Graduate Research Excellence Award, Kushwaha also received a Cletis Williams and William E. and Martha Jane Williams Outstanding Thesis Award from the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, which resulted in a \$1,000 cash award.

“The Williams Outstanding Thesis Award was established to recognize graduate students who have excelled in the preparation and presentation of their research in a thesis,” according to the award criteria. “The award will be used to recognize outstanding graduate students in the OSU Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.”

Peter Muriana, FAPC food microbiologist and Kushwaha’s advisor, nominated Kushwaha for both awards, along with advisory committee members and FAPC faculty members Christina DeWitt, Patricia Rayas-Duarte and William McGlynn.

“It’s nice to see students get rewarded for the effort they’ve put into their research,” Muriana said. “Kushwaha’s research may provide some new information regarding the potential seriousness of strong adherence among select strains of a problem foodborne pathogen.”



Her research focus at the FAPC involved characterization of adherence-variant strains of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Kushwaha is continuing to work with Muriana as a postdoctoral researcher in the FAPC Food Microbiology Laboratory.

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