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Texas A&M Professor Wins Society of Toxicology Translational Impact Award

Reston, Va.; March 17, 2014 — For his work improving public health, Texas A&M University’s Timothy D. Phillips, PhD, ATS, has won the 2014 Society of Toxicology (SOT) Translational Impact Award. The Translational Impact Award was developed in 2009 by SOT, a professional association of more than 7,700 toxicologists, to distinguish scientists whose research is improving human health in areas of toxicological concern. Dr. Phillips will be formally presented with his peer-nominated award at SOT’s 53rd Annual Meeting and ToxExpo in Phoenix, Ariz., on March 23, 2014, and will deliver a lecture on March 26, 2014.

“Dr. Phillips is an internationally recognized leader in food safety and toxicology,” says nominator Jia-Sheng Wang, PhD. “His research endeavors on detoxification of food-borne toxins with clay-based technology have greatly impacted food and feed safety.”

The SOT Translational Award recognizes Dr. Phillips for his pioneering research with dioctahedral smectite clays in the US and Africa. His research shows that the clays, which were used as medicine more than 2,000 years ago, can bind and render toxins, such as aflatoxin B1, harmless. Toxins like aflatoxin B1 are food-borne and are associated with liver disease and cancer. They cause the most damage in places like Asia and Africa, where food shortages lead people to eat contaminated food or feed it to their livestock, which means the toxicants are then passed along to humans through the animal’s milk or meat.

Dr. Phillips discovered that certain clays can be added to one’s diet, without harmful effect, and also provide the benefit of preventing the human digestive system from absorbing the aflatoxin. It’s estimated that up to 10 percent of the world’s animal feeds now contain a clay-based sorbent that Dr. Phillips’ research developed, while clinical trials are underway to see if the product is safe for human use, as well. There is also research being done by Dr. Phillips and his team to see if clay can also serve as a solution for polluted drinking water.

Dr. Phillips has been named a Distinguished Professor and holds the Reed Endowed Chair in Toxicology at Texas A&M University. Since joining the faculty in 1979, he has published more than 185 papers.

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Dr. Phillips received his BS from Mississippi State University and his MS in science education and chemistry and his PhD in chemistry from the University of Southern Mississippi.

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About SOT
Founded in 1961, the Society of Toxicology (SOT) is a professional and scholarly organization of more than 7,700 scientists from academic institutions, government, and industry representing the great variety of individuals who practice toxicology in the US and abroad. SOT is committed to creating a safer and healthier world by advancing the science of toxicology. The Society promotes the acquisition and utilization of knowledge in toxicology, aids in the protection of public health, and has a strong commitment to education in toxicology and to the recruitment of students and new members into the profession. For more information about SOT and toxicology, visit the Society online at www.toxicology.org, follow us on Twitter @SOToxicology, and like us on Facebook.

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