

Wellcome Trust announces spending bonanza

The Wellcome Trust, the world's largest medical research charity, is planning to boost its annual spending.

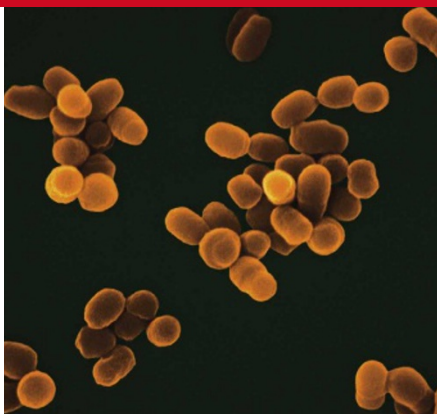
The trust, which backs a broad range of biomedical research, will increase its expenditure by 60% to £4 billion (US\$8 billion) over the next five years.

Total grant funding is expected to rise from £520 million to £650 million annually, according to spokesman Craig Brierley. A portion of the new money will go towards research into the genetic basis for common diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

Some £500 million will go towards assisting construction of a new biomedical campus in London, a fund to develop new treatments based on fundamental science, and a campaign to improve Africa's biomedical infrastructure.

Lab workers exposed to brucellosis by safety tests

More than 900 people working in 254 labs around the United States and Canada might have been exposed to modified *Brucella abortus* last autumn, because of their failure



Handle with care: *Brucella abortus*.

to follow proper handling procedures for the bacterium, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* has reported.

Brucella abortus primarily causes disease in cows, but it can also make people ill. It was posted to 1,316 clinical laboratories in a joint exercise — led by the College of American Pathologists, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Association of Public Health Laboratories — to test the labs' procedures for dealing with suspected bioterrorism agents.

Also last week, watchdog groups reacted with outrage to news that virologist Yoshihiro Kawaoka is working with a modified Ebola virus in a biosafety level-2

(BSL-2) laboratory at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, but has not consulted the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) about the work. The NIH previously overruled a decision by the university to allow Kawaoka to work with Ebola genes in a BSL-3 lab, saying that it wanted him in a BSL-4 one.

No conflict of interest in misconduct case, says lab

Officials at the US Department of Energy's Office of Science are resisting a finding by department attorneys that a report of an investigation into alleged scientific misconduct at a national laboratory qualifies for public release, according to a 15 January letter from the department.

The report reviews allegations against electron-microscopy researchers in the group of Stephen Pennycook at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee (see *Nature* 450, 590; 2007). One of the report's three authors, David Williams of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, says investigators spent hours reading papers received from Oak Ridge management, and found mistakes but no misconduct.

Williams also confirms that, prior to the investigation, he and co-editor Barry