

Patents II: How ISU Stacks Up

Intellectual property generated at Iowa State often is protected by patents and transferred to industry through the process of licensing. The following information indicates patent activity at ISU as compared to the total activity in the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO): www.uspto.gov

The USPTO received 240,090 patent applications in FY98 and issued 140,574 patents. Income received from patent fees was in excess of \$751 million. An estimated 259,000 applications were filed in FY99. On average, it takes 16 months from the time a patent application is filed until the patent is awarded. A description of each type of patent follows:

- Utility: A new and useful process (operation or method), machine, manufacture (articles that are made), composition of matter (chemicals and metallurgical, including combinations of elements), or new use or improvement of something that already exists. This is the most common type of patent and is valid for 20 years from the filing date.
- Plant: Invented or discovered plants that are asexually reproduced or a distinct and new variety (including mutants and hybrids). This patent is valid for 20 years from the filing date.
- Provisional: Generally refers to a utility type of patent. A provisional application filing provides protection of the described invention for *one* year after filing. Within the following year, a utility patent application must be submitted to maintain the priority date established by the provisional filing. New information included in the utility patent application will have a priority date the same as the filing date for the utility application. The priority date is the date used to determine what information contained in the described invention was previously know to the public and consequently not patentable.

Office of
Biotechnology

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ISU Research Foundation (ISURF): www.public.iastate.edu/~isurf

In FY99, ISURF received 160 intellectual property disclosures (when an inventor tells ISURF they may have a patentable invention). Fifty-five patent applications were filed, 51 provisional applications were filed, and 48 patents were issued. On June 30, 1999 ISURF had 127 patents pending in the USPTO Office. ISU ranked 10th out of 132 universities surveyed in the number of patents in a 1998 survey. To help put this in perspective, the 55 FY99 patents issued to ISU represents less than one-tenth of one percent of the activity in the USPTO.

FY 99 Patents Filed	
Area	Number
Biotechnology (ag and life sciences)	25
Physical Sciences and Engineering	17
Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	8
Plant Germplasm	4
Consumer Products	1

If you have any questions about intellectual property, patents, or information disclosures related to your research, or how it might be impacted by an industrial funding source, please contact:

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