



# NEWS RELEASE

USDA FOREST SERVICE • FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY

One Gifford Pinchot Drive • Madison, WI 53726-2398 • Web site: [www.fpl.fs.fed.us](http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us)

---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NR # 20041103-1

November 3, 2004

Contact: **George Couch, (608) 231-9295**

E-mail: [gcouch@fs.fed.us](mailto:gcouch@fs.fed.us)

### FOREST SERVICE RESEARCHER HONORED FOR WORK ON WOOD DECAY

Madison, Wis.— Dr. Kenneth Hammel, a research chemist at the USDA Forest Service's Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) here, was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) by the association's policymaking council. Hammel is also a USDA associate professor in the Department of Bacteriology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Hammel, a Madison resident, was cited for his "outstanding contributions to understanding biodegradative processes produced by microbes and for the discovery of new mechanisms involved in fungal wood decay."

Hammel is one of only 308 scientists and engineers worldwide named as AAAS Fellows this year.

At FPL, Hammel's research has focused on learning how certain fungi cause wood to decay.

"Such decay-causing fungi play a vital role in forest ecosystems. The same fungi, however, can also cause extensive damage to houses and other structures made of wood. Better understanding of how the fungi interact with wood could lead to the development of improved wood preservatives," Hammel said.

Hammel earned his bachelor's degree in genetics from the University of California at Berkeley and his Ph.D. degree in comparative biochemistry, also from UC-Berkeley. In 1983, he was awarded a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) postdoctoral fellowship to do research in the microbiology department at the Philipps-University in Marburg, Germany. From 1984 to 1986, he held a joint appointment as postdoctoral research associate at the UW-Madison and FPL.

After teaching for five years at the State University of New York in Syracuse, he returned to the UW-Madison and to FPL as a research chemist and team leader in FPL's Institute for Microbial and Biochemical Technology.

The USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory was established in 1910 in Madison, Wis., with the mission to conserve and extend the country's wood resources. Today, FPL's research scientists work with academic and industrial researchers and other government agencies in exploring ways to promote healthy forests and clean water, and improve papermaking and recycling processes. Information is

available at FPL's Web site: [www.fpl.fs.fed.us](http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us). Through FPL's Advanced Housing Research Center, ([www.fpl.fs.fed.us/ahrc/](http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/ahrc/)), researchers also work to improve homebuilding technologies and materials.

###

NOTE: a photo of Dr. Hammel is available.