

TORP receives million-dollar DOE contract for Oil Recovery Research

The Department of Energy announced the award of a three-year research project with a total value of one million dollars to the Tertiary Oil Recovery Project to evaluate the use of low-cost biosurfactants produced from high-starch agriculture process waste to improve oil recovery in fractured carbonate reservoirs. Professor Jenn-Tai Liang of the Chemical and Petroleum Engineering Department is the Principal Investigator of this project. Specifically, the project will examine the ability of the biosurfactants to mediate wettability changes that positively affect oil recovery in fractured carbonate rock by accelerating the spontaneous imbibition process during waterflooding. The successful completion of this project not only will increase domestic oil production by enabling recovery of previously stranded oil, but it will also benefit the environment by promoting the beneficial reuse of agriculture process waste products. The research will be a joint effort between the Tertiary Oil Recovery Project at the University of Kansas, and the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory.