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Ground Broken for National Bio and Agro Defense Facility

MANHATTAN, Kan. (AP) - Nearly seven years after Manhattan, Kansas, was chosen as the site for a national research center focusing on deadly animal diseases, federal and state officials were helping break ground Wednesday on the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility.

The price tag for the plant on the Kansas State University campus initially was estimated to be \$451 million when it was awarded to Manhattan in late 2008. It has since ballooned to \$1.2 billion, which federal officials have attributed to changes in the lab's design to mitigate the possibility of a release of deadly pathogen.

The center also weathered a financial crisis in which opponents called for funding to be cut after a federal report questioned the wisdom of constructing such a laboratory in Tornado Alley.

Associated Press