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PRESS RELEASE

Massive new investment in world-class research at IBERS

One of Wales's top research centres has unveiled details of a £25 million investment plans to take its work on to another level.

More information about the developments and their effect on Welsh farming, the economy and the world environment will be on display at this year's Royal Welsh Show at Builth Wells.

Aberystwyth University's Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) was created 15 months ago to create a world-class centre of excellence in a wide range of research that will help tackle some of the major issues facing the world today.

It is the descendant of the world-famous Welsh Plant Breeding Station that was established exactly 90 years ago.

- One of the major developments at Gogerddan will be a new branded Institute for Food, Water and Energy Security, with an international laboratory and accommodation for visiting scientists.
- The campus at Penrhyncoch on the outskirts of Aberystwyth will also be the centre for research that supports enterprise in the Agricultural, Food, Bio-renewables and land-based industries.
- The investment will include new glasshouses and automated imaging and plant identification systems.
- There will be facilities for studying the genome of plants in order to breed new varieties that can help in combatting the effects of climate change and providing more security in food and energy supplies.

The farm-based trials for which Gogerddan is famous will also continue and much of IBERS' work is directly descended from the projects started in 1919, when the WPBS was set up as part of Aberystwyth University with labs and trial plots in the town.

Just like today, procedures developed at Aberystwyth were copied all over the world and plant variants started transforming grassland farming both in Wales and the world. The Station moved to

Gogerddan in 1955 and started to broaden its horizon into the multi-discipline research centre of today.

Following the merger of its direct predecessor, IGER, into the University, IBERS is once again part of the larger body, bringing together new teams of scientists and researchers and linking teaching with research.

“It is fitting that we start on the major investment at Gogerddan as we celebrate 90 years of ground-breaking research,” said IBERS Director, Dr Wayne Powell. “Our vision remains the same – to carry out world-class research for the benefit of farming, the environment and the economy and to help offer security in the three major areas of water, food and energy.

“Naturally, our fields of research are far wider but, just like those pioneers in 1919, we are responding to the great challenges of the day and putting our research expertise at the service of Wales and the wider world community.”