A $44,000 research grant has been awarded to Louisiana State University for various studies of crawfish and their commercial value. The grant was made by the Economic Development Administration of the United States Department of Commerce.

The 18-month study, now underway, is under direction of Dr. Richard T. Lovell, LSU assistant professor of food science. Assisting him are Dr. Fred H. Hoskins and Dr. Robert M. Grodner.

Dr. Lovell said the study will involve both basic and applied research.

“The Department of Commerce is interested in the expansion of the crawfish industry in Louisiana to create more jobs,” he said. “Louisiana, potentially, could increase crawfish production many times over its present rate. From an economic standpoint, crawfish could become as important a food product as shrimp,” he added.

The LSU food expert said scientists don’t know the nutritional value of crawfish, or the chemical composition, which would have a bearing, on which kind of processing and preserving are best. Little is known about the bacteria which affect crawfish and lead to spoilage, he said.

The research team will also attempt to learn the best forms of marketable crawfish dishes and answer such questions as “Does a bisque require too much hand labor to be profitable as a canned or frozen product?”

At the end of the 18-month study, Dr. Lovell will present a feasibility report on proposed methods of crawfish processing to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Graduate students assisting in the project are John A. Barkate of Sulphur; Nelson A. Cox, Napoleonville; James R. LaFleur, Opelousas; Scuddy J. LeBlanc, Morganza, and George J. Flick, New Orleans.