Spiders and silkworms and hagfish, oh my! Justin Jones on spider silk research at USU

The next time you're out walking and you see a beautifully-constructed circular spider web, you might be looking at the work of an orb-weaver. Their webs use an incredibly strong and stretchy silk that is laced with a glue that both stops the momentum of insects and secures them to the web. The spider silk lab at USU works to research and reproduce this incredible polymer for use across a spectrum of uses: biotechnology to techno-economics to medicine.

Justin Jones, assistant professor of biology and director of the spider silk lab at USU, has been researching and developing spider silk and its related technologies for nearly 20 years. In this episode of Instead, he tell us why we use silkworm, goats, and alfalfa to produce spider silk, how he got started in this research, and how he's leveraging his spider silk knowledge to learn more about hagfish proteins at the behest of the U.S. Navy.