

Plant Materials Program News

Aberdeen Plant Materials Center Open House

Open House and New Additions at Aberdeen

Kristen Clayton - NRCS Public Affairs

Plant and seed specimens, posters and unique equipment were on display at an USDA-NRCS Aberdeen Plant Materials Center open house August 17th. Fellow USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service employees, curious community members and employees of neighboring agencies stopped in to see the many new developments.

The Plant Materials Center (PMC) displays included tested and new releases of grasses, wildflowers and shrubs for use in natural resources conservation projects in the Intermountain West. Visitors could pick up plant fact sheets and other technical information.

Wetland Plant Ecologist Chris Hoag recently returned from a trip to Afghanistan where he held riparian and wetland workshops during spring 2005 and 2006. Hoag shared stories and photos with visitors.

Across the parking lot from the Plant Materials Center, an open house was also held for a newly completed, 12,000-square-foot, \$5 million Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Laboratory. ARS and University of Idaho researchers discussed how the lab is designing and conducting experiments aimed at breeding superior potatoes, grains, and small-grain-based feeds for farm-raised rainbow trout.

While ARS and PMC maintain completely different missions, PMC team leader Loren St. John says the two USDA agencies work together. "We're both dealing with plants. We exchange farm fields on occasion when special isolation is needed for a new test species. When ever something comes up, we don't hesitate to ask for help, or they drop in with plant questions," said St. John, of his neighbors.

ARS scientists were among the guests at the PMC open house. Also stopping in were Senator Mike Crapo's staff members, Karen Brown and Laura Thurston Goodroe. Senator Crapo was a speaker at the dedication ceremony of the new ARS lab held earlier in the day.



<Senator Mike Crapo staff members, Karen Brown and Laura Thurston Goodroe discuss plant varieties on display with PMC Team Leader, Loren St. John.

>Specialized equipment developed by PMC staff offer many solutions for conservation planting. Boyd Simonson demonstrates the Waterjet Stinger to Montpelier Soil



Conservationist, Jay Howard. Brent Cornforth and Cameron Williams discuss other equipment in the background.



<PMC Team Leader, Loren St. John and neighboring ARS scientists discuss PMC accomplishments

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