

# Manhattan Plant Materials Center

Manhattan, Kansas



*A newsletter in support of the Plant Materials Program for Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska*

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## Future Farmers of America Meeting

The 32nd annual Future Farmers of America National Agricultural Career Show kicked off on November 12th in Kansas City, Missouri. The news media estimated the number of participants at somewhere over 40,000 and other sources were as high as 45,000. Team USDA had a section devoted to its exhibits at Bartle Hall. The NRCS exhibit was by far the largest and most complex of the USDA entrants. The NRCS exhibit contained a pond, two running streams, buffer strips around the stream, and high residue cultivated fields beyond the buffer strips. The majority of the plant materials were supplied by Earl May Nurseries of Kansas City, however the Manhattan Plant Materials Center supplied all the native grasses used in the display.

The displays main focus was the buffer strip initiative and the use of plants to protect our valuable soil resource. Traffic at the exhibit was brisk during the three days of the show and a lot of posters and buffer strip information was distributed to eager young future farmers and their advisors. The display received many compliments from show participants and other USDA exhibitors. It was encouraging to talk to so many young students that were excited and eager to learn about agriculture. These young folks are the future of agriculture in this country, and if the representative sample that visited the NRCS booth are typical then agriculture will be in good hands. It is reassuring to know that there

are still many positive, optimistic people involved in agriculture.

## PM Program Internet Access

The Plant Materials Program is now accessible through the internet. The home page address is: <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>. From this location, you can access general information about the program, a PM staff directory, information on over 400 plant materials that have been released through the program, a partial listing of seed and plant vendor sources, fact sheets on over 130 different plant species, and access to the home pages of the 26 PM centers located across the nation.

## Field Evaluations

Thanks to all who completed the 1997 field evaluation planting forms. The information that you provided on these forms will provide us with a better understanding of the adaptation and performance of the material being tested. In early February of 1997, a summary of all field plantings by field office from 1986 through 1996 was distributed to Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. This summary was recently updated with 1997 information. Copies of the summary are available by contacting me at 785-823-4541 or e-mail: [terry.conway@ks.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:terry.conway@ks.nrcs.usda.gov).

## Foundation Class Seed Sales

Beginning FY98, foundation class seed/plants produced at the Manhattan PMC will be sold to commercial dealers. Previously, the seed was provided to growers at no cost. The funds generated by the seed sales will be used to offset production cost of the foundation class material. This would include such cost as bags, tags, fertilizer, seed testing, inspection fees, shipping cost, etc. Seed will continue to be provided at no charge to universities, Agricultural Research Service, NRCS Field Offices, and Conservation Districts for experimental and demonstration purposes.

### Smut At The PMC

Now that we have your attention! We mean seed smut on switchgrass in our foundation production field. The following abstract was presented as a poster paper at the 1997 American Society of Agronomy meetings held at Anaheim, CA.

#### Seed Smut in 'Blackwell' Switchgrass Foundation Seed Production Field.

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We have identified *Tilletia maclagani* (Berk.) Clint. as the cause of the seed smut which for many years has progressively reduced yields in Blackwell foundation seed production fields at the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center, Manhattan, KS. In 1996, approximately 25% of the panicles were smutted in the current seed production field which was seeded in 1988. Infected shoots are shorter than normal and their panicles are compact due to shortened branches. Infected panicles emerge in early to mid-June, about a month before healthy ones. Fresh teliospores placed on water agar began producing sporidia in about five hours

but no teliospores germinated on Captan-treated seed on water agar. Cultures transferred to tubes of moist sterile soil two years ago remain viable. Cultures established from teliospores placed on petri plates of water agar two years ago and maintained by occasional transfers to fresh water agar continue to grow and sporulate profusely.

### Do You Know?

Do you know that each state has a committee dedicated to the promotion and use of plant materials to help address resource concerns? Do you know that this plant materials committee is typically made up of state office technical support staff, plant materials personnel, field and area representatives, and many non NRCS partners who have an interest in plant materials. Do you know that this committee has the responsibility for making recommendations to the state conservationist regarding all plant materials related activities within your state. Do you know who represents you on this committee?

The following is a list of those committee members which represent you at the field and area levels. If you have questions or comments regarding the program, contact these individuals for help.

**Kansas:** Mike Marshall, Bob Tricks, Joe Hecht, Alan Gentry, Larry Schieferecke, Loren Frees. **Nebraska:** Lisa McMillan, Shelly Watson, Cathie Mills, Merle Illian. **Oklahoma:** Jim Williams, Alvin Trissell, Phil Perryman, Ken Risenhoover, Danny Thomas, David Wells, Mark Conkling, Jim Altom, Rick Lane.

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