

Dwight Tober Retires

Dwight Tober, Plant Materials Specialist, retires on September 2nd, with over 33 years of dedicated service to the NRCS. Dwight started his career as a range conservationist in Pierre, SD. He then began his 31 years in the plant materials program at Bismarck. He has served as a soil conservationist, Plant Materials Center Manager, and Plant Materials Specialist. Dwight had a major role in development and formal release of many grass, forb, shrub, and tree varieties. Dwight has worked closely with commercial seed growers and seed companies to ensure releases are commercially available for conservation plantings. He has been a leader in technology development for prairie restoration and prairie landscaping.

Dwight has been very active in promoting and organizing many demonstration and educational plantings and programs. Each year, Dwight has maintained over 100 active field plantings in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

Dwight has shared his plant expertise with school children, gardeners, farmers and ranchers, university personnel, researchers and extension specialists. He has participated in international technology exchange programs and activities, including a trip to Kazakhstan. Dwight has coordinated annual multi-state training sessions for NRCS employees. He has published many technical articles, regional, national, and popular publications. His strong technical background in plant materials has resulted in many speaking engagements across the country. Dwight has been an active member in various professional organizations. As a way for native plant enthusiasts to share information, he pioneered the Native Plant Summit conference. He has received numerous accolades and awards, including the "Outstanding Achievement Award" from the Society for Range Management.

Thank you, Dwight, for your hard work and dedication to the plant materials program. You will be missed!



Dwight, planting the little bluestem assembly, near Mandan, ND



Dwight, at the off-center evaluation planting, near Hettinger, ND

Plants for Sandy Soils

Sandy soils are susceptible to water and wind erosion. Vegetative cover is essential to prevent soil loss and productivity. Prairie sandreed and sand bluestem are grasses naturally growing on sandy soils. The PMC is currently developing a new release of prairie sandreed (with MN origin) that displays less leaf and stem rust than presently available releases. A release of sand bluestem that produces viable seed in the Northern Great Plains is also being developed. Previous work by the PMC related to prairie sandreed and sand bluestem biomass production can be found in a recent publication titled *Prairie Sandreed and Sand Bluestem Performance Trials, North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota*. Each field office should receive a single copy in the near future.

Sand cherry is a small shrub that naturally grows on sandy soils. It produces fruit that is edible to humans and wildlife. The PMC has begun seed collection, which is the first stage of release development. The goal is to release a sand cherry that is a good fruit producer, vigorous, and winter hardy in the Dakotas and Minnesota.

Nancy Jensen, Agronomist

Grass Variety Book Updated

Several new species and many new varieties were added to the 20-page *Grass Varieties for North Dakota* publication. There is new narrative information for many species. Green wheatgrass, orchardgrass, timothy, prairie junegrass, and Virginia wildrye were some of the species added. Even though it was written for North Dakota, most of the varieties are also adapted to parts of South Dakota and Minnesota. One copy of the publication will be distributed to each office in the near future along with the prairie sandreed/sand bluestem publication. A handy reference in the publication is the plant species guide for special conditions.

Dwight Tober, Plant Materials Specialist



A clipping crew recently harvested forage production on the grass/legume plots near Bison, SD. The plot of meadow brome grass and yellow-flowered alfalfa yielded over 3300 lb/ac.

All programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis.