



January 10, 2002

To: **Field Offices**  
**Plant Materials Centers**  
**Plant Materials Specialists**

CAPE MAY  
PLANT  
MATERIALS  
CENTER

Subj: **Update of Cape May PMC Activities.**

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

The Cape May PMC quarterly update is intended to provide field staff with a short description of PMC current activities. Please take a few minutes to read it, if you make a hard copy, pass it along to others in your office, and when fully routed, feel free to file it in your recycle bin. If you wish to join our e-mail list, or have partners that want to be included in our distribution please contact us. Thanks!

Natural Resources  
Conservation  
Service

## MEETINGS

1536 Route North  
Cape May CH, NJ  
08210

### Technical Advisory Activities:

(609) 465-5901  
FAX (609) 465-9284

The Cape May Plant Materials Center hosted a Northeast Joint PMC Technical Advisory Meeting and the State Conservationists' Advisory Meeting in October. This was the first time in almost ten years that all the technical representatives and the State Conservationists were in attendance.

E-mail:  
[wskaradek@nj.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:wskaradek@nj.nrcs.usda.gov) or  
[bturnier@nj.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:bturnier@nj.nrcs.usda.gov)

The group generated a list of the Resource Concerns for the Northeast Region, which was later prioritized and distributed by Dr. David Smart, SRC NJ. A follow-up meeting between the National PMC, Big Flats and Cape May PMC Managers helped to coordinate efforts between the three PMC's.

Internet:  
[www.Plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.Plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov)

The list of resource concerns is available by contacting any of the PMCs and will be posted on the web-site for the NJ-PMC.

### Conservation Plants Growers' Forum:

The Cape May PMC hosted a commercial grower's forum, which was attended by the top six nurseries in the PMC service area. The meeting was the first of what will become annual Grower Forums.

*Finding Vegetative  
Solutions  
to Conservation  
Problems*

Background: For a long time (if not since the beginning of time), we as an agency and program have always held our technical meetings and advisory meetings deciding what we need for conservation with very little input or involvement from the commercial growers. By coordinating a growers' forum literally the day after the Advisory Meeting, we were able to better define what products the growers would NOT be willing to start producing. The input received served to streamline our efforts in starting up only those products that have a strong likelihood of being successfully developed into commercial availability.

## **PLANT DEVELOPMENT**

### **Suther Prairie Products:**

Roger Hansard, Plant Materials Specialist in North Carolina, was involved in an effort of significant plant materials history. There exists a truly remnant American prairie that is part of a parcel of land deeded from the King of England to the family that still owns it. Various forms of documents have provided evidence that the prairie component of this land had never seen the American plow. As a result the genetic fabric of the species comprising this prairie plant community is truly remnant Americana material.

Since 1999, the Cape May PMC has been collecting Indiangrass, big bluestem and little bluestem from the site and getting production up and running. As of October of 2001, we had enough material to send seed out to commercial growers. This will enable producers like Ernst Conservation Seeds to offer quality eastern origin materials for conservation programs here in the east.

The priceless contributions that these products will make to our natural heritage would not have been realized without the personal sacrifice and untiring efforts of Roger Hansard, a man to be congratulated.

### **New England Ecotypes:**

As a result of input from the October Advisory Meeting, the entire Cape May PMC Team scoured the landscape of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. We targeted roundhead clover, Indiangrass, big bluestem, and little bluestem. As a result of our efforts, we will be establishing genetically broad based poly-cross seed production fields with New England only materials. This material has already received interest from such groups as Massachusetts Audubon, Mass. Wildlife and Native Plant Societies in New England.

## **TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER**

### **PMC Tour:**

As mentioned, the Cape May PMC hosted the Joint PMC Northeast Technical and State Conservationist Advisory Meetings. A technical tour of the facility was included during the three-day event.

### **Technology Notes:**

Two Technology Notes were distributed to field offices and Coastal Municipalities throughout our nine-state service area. The Notes documented two separate visits to two different sites on the East Coast experiencing similar resource concerns, American beachgrass Die-out. These Technical Notes were distributed in response to increased technical inquiries from different regions pertaining to beachgrass die-out on beach replenishment projects.

## **MISCELLEANEOUS**

The Cape May PMC received a massive budget cut that will have adverse impacts on our ability to deliver a holistic and comprehensive plant materials program to our service area customers and partners. We will be revising our Business Plan and planned plant development activities to be more in-sync with our staffing and budgetary constraints.

We remain semi-optimistic that next year will be better.