

From: National Cotton Council  
P.O. Box 12285  
Memphis, Tennessee 38182  
Telephone: (901) 274-9030  
Contact: T. Cotton Nelson

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**USDA AGRONOMIST RECEIVES COTTON GENETICS AWARD**

**SAN ANTONIO (Special) --** Dr. Jack McCarty Jr., a research agronomist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service is the recipient of the 1990 Cotton Genetics Award.

McCarty, who works in the Cotton Host Plant Resistance unit at the Crop Science Research Laboratory in Starkville, MS, since 1976, has made many significant and lasting contributions to cotton genetic improvement. He is especially recognized for his pioneering research on germplasm enhancement and host-plant resistance.

Commercial cotton breeders have given a special award to a scientist for outstanding basic research in cotton genetics for the past 29 years. Criteria for the award are established by the Joint Cotton Breeding Policy Committee comprised of representatives from state experiment stations, USDA, private breeders and the National Cotton Council.

Dr. McCarty, who has B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in Agronomy-Crops from Mississippi State University, has worked in cotton research for 13 years. He is an author on 76 manuscripts which include 17 germplasm releases, one book chapter, 40 articles in major refereed journals and 14 Experiment Station Research reports.

Dr. McCarty's primary research assignment is the conversion of races of wild upland cotton into cottons that will flower in the U.S. and thus can be used

easily by breeders in this country. His releases involve 393 lines from 176 wild cottons, collected mostly from Central America and Mexico.

"This conversion program greatly broadens the genetic base of cotton, insuring genetic gains in yield, fiber quality, and pest resistance," said Richard Sheetz, manager, cotton research, Cargill Hybrid Seeds. "Race stocks that Jack has converted have shown resistance to boll weevils, Heliothis, plant bugs, pink bollworms, spider mites, and root knot nematodes."

Dr. McCarty is also part of a team that has developed new techniques to measure insect resistance, discovered new sources of pest resistance, and developed improved techniques for handling of experimental germplasm.

"It is this basic and often less glamorous work carried out by public researchers such as Dr. McCarty that plays such an important role for the future of our industry," Sheetz noted.

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