

COLLEGE STATION SCIENTIST RECEIVES 1998 COTTON GENETICS RESEARCH AWARD

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COLLEGE STATION — Dr. Edward A. Percival, USDA-ARS geneticist at the Southern Crops Research Laboratory in College Station, received the 1998 Cotton Genetics Research Award at the recent Beltwide Cotton Conference.

The award was presented during the National Cotton Council's cotton improvement conference, recognizing his lifelong contribution to improvement of cotton varietal lines and his work to secure the preservation and integrity of the national cotton germplasm collection.

Percival has served as curator of the National Collection of *Gossypium* (cotton) Germplasm since 1982, and as curator of the Texas portion of the germplasm collection since 1974. He also received \$500 in recognition of his work in cotton genetics.

Commercial cotton breeders have recognized outstanding basic cotton genetics research with this award for the past 36 years. Award criteria is determined by a joint cotton breeding policy committee composed of state experiment station scientists, USDA, commercial plant breeders and the NCC.

Under Percival's leadership, the national cotton germplasm collection was organized into an effective system for obtaining, evaluating and maintaining germplasm and began communicating information about the collection's contents.

The national collection increased by almost 40 percent during Percival's tenure, due to his extensive travel to more than 20 foreign nations to obtain additional and exotic germplasms, said Dr. Russ Kohel, Southern Crops Research Lab research leader.

"Dr. Percival's name is synonymous with cotton germplasm. He is the focal point for virtually all cotton germplasm work in the United States," said Dr. Kamal El-Zik, Texas A&M University professor, plant geneticist and co-nominator. "He recognizes the importance of the national germplasm collection to cotton improvement efforts around the globe, and works diligently to maintain the physical condition of seed stored in the collection, add new germplasm, and rejuvenate old collection materials."

Percival earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees at Texas A&M. He is a professor there and lectures extensively on the importance of cotton germplasm and activities associated with the national cotton germplasm collection.

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