

Dr. Richard Percy is 2006 Cotton Genetics Research Award Recipient

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NEW ORLEANS, LA – Dr. Richard G. Percy, a USDA Agricultural Research Service research geneticist in Arizona, is the recipient of the 2006 Cotton Genetics Research Award. The announcement was made here today during the Cotton Improvement Conference of the National Cotton Council-coordinated 2007 Beltwide Cotton Conferences.

Dr. Percy, who received \$1,000 in recognition of his efforts, works in the cotton physiology, genetics and host plant resistance research unit at the Western Cotton Research Laboratory in Maricopa, Arizona. He also is an adjunct professor of Plant Sciences at the University of Arizona.

Throughout his career, Dr. Percy has demonstrated a multidisciplinary approach to identify and ameliorate limiting factors in the production of high quality cotton. During 2006, he released three high quality, heat adapted germplasm lines. A germplasm line with superior adaptation specific for California also was derived from that project and will be released.

Dr. Don Jones, associate director of agricultural research for Cotton Incorporated and one of Dr. Percy's nominators, said Dr. Percy demonstrated an ability to wisely choose relevant issues to study and to communicate with colleagues.

"Dr. Percy took the lead in population development and early generation selection and coordinated the evaluation of advance lines in cooperation with his colleagues," Jones said. "He fully understands that United States cotton producers face mounting input expenses and competitive pressure from man-made fibers. His projects are improving cotton in terms of yield, quality and abiotic stress tolerance."

Another nominator, Hal Moser, a research scientist at California Planting Cotton Seed Distributors, said Percy's germplasm enhancement program also has broadened the genetic diversity of *Gossypium barbadense*, resulting in improvement of several important traits in Pima cotton.

"Clearly, Richard has established a strong track record in developing useful Pima and upland cotton varieties and elite germplasm lines," Moser said.

In addition to his professionalism, Percy has demonstrated a spirit of cooperation and service. He has served on the Cotton Germplasm Committee for Crop Science, as an editor for the *Journal of Cotton Science*, as chairman of the Beltwide Cotton Improvement Conference and as a co-chair of the Germplasm and Genetic Stocks Workgroup at the International Cotton Genome Initiative meetings in India and Brazil. He also hosted the Cotton Heat Tolerance Workshop in Maricopa, Ariz., in 2006.

Prior to joining USDA-ARS in 1984, Percy was a research associate at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in College Station. He holds a B.S. in biology from TexasTechUniversity and earned a M.S. and a Ph.D. in genetics from TexasA&MUniversity. He has authored more than 50 publications, 33 of which were in peer reviewed journals.

U.S. commercial cotton breeders have presented the Cotton Genetics Research Award for more than 40 years to a scientist for outstanding basic research in cotton genetics. The Joint Cotton Breeding Committee, comprised of representatives from state experiment stations, USDA, private breeders and the National Cotton Council, establishes award criteria.

Source: National Cotton Council