



GOLDEN STATE PLANT NEWS

U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Lockeford Plant Materials Center

April 1998

California Plant Materials Activities April 1998

Big Bang for the Buck: In 1997, the estimated value of seed and plant production of 30 USDA-NRCS Lockeford Plant Materials Center cultivars was \$934,849. The conservation impact of these cultivars was great, and the cultivars met all of the national conservation planning objectives. The 30 cultivars were used in 37 standard conservation practices, such as cover and green manure crop, critical area planting, grass waterway, and range seeding.

Currently, there are eight active studies involving eucalyptus trees, halophytes, native grasses, vetches, and water use of landscape plants. These studies include 100 species, of which 15 are native plants. There are a total of 196 accessions. Three selected releases of purple needle grass, *Nassella pulchra*, were made from Alameda, Colusa, and Tehama Counties.

Regarding technology transfer, eight plant materials presentations were given on topics such as cover crops, soil quality, halophytes, PMC open house, tours, and training. Two Golden State Plant News newsletters were completed. A popular article on new release methods was published in trade journals. Seven plant materials technical notes (TN-46 through TN-52) were published and sent to all field

offices. The unique thing about these technical notes is that they were written by or in conjunction with RCD and field office staff.

The Lockeford Plant Materials Center workload summary, based on four full-time employees, is as follows:

I. Technology development (such as releases)	8%
II. Other technology (studies)	12%
III. Technology transfer	
a. Technical notes and papers	16%
b. Oral	6%
c. Field Plantings	5%
e. Foundation seed	15%
IV. Facility and land maintenance	33%
V. Other activities	5%

There are currently three full-time employees: Dave Dyer, PMC Manager/Plant Materials Specialist; Clem Avitia, Farm Superintendent; and Jim Hutson, Gardener/Seed Processor.

The Agronomist/Soil Conservationist position has been vacant since December 30, 1997. The Plant Materials Specialist position and the Office Automation Clerk position have been vacant for a few years. The PMC budget in 1987 was \$195,000. The 1998 budget is \$244,000. In 1976 the Lockeford PMC had funding for a staff of nine.

The field planting program is alive and well, with 49 field plantings installed in the past three years, including many using native plants. The information gained from these plantings is being used to update the vegetative section of the NRCS technical guide. Currently, there are fifteen active plant materials conservation field trials.

You are invited to browse the Plant Materials Program Internet web site to find out what we are doing to conserve our Nation's natural resources. On our site you will find information about the plants and technology that we are developing. Our URL is: plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov.

California Plant Materials Priorities

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| 1. Sustainable Agriculture
Cropland:
A. Cover crops, IPM, BIOS, BIFFS
B. Nitrogen management
C. Agroforestry | 3. Wildland and urban interface
A. EWP seed mixes for use after fires |
| Rangeland:
A. Noxious weed control
B. Establishment techniques | 4. Wetland restoration
A. Native plants for establishment of constructed and restored wetlands |
| 2. Critical area treatment
A. Native grass seeding rates & Mixes
B. Bioengineering | 5. Riparian restoration
A. Filter and buffer strips |
| | 6. Natural resources & plant science training
A. Use the PMC as a training facility |