

A Brief History of the Aberdeen Plant Materials Center  
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The Aberdeen PMC began operations in 1939 on a rented 35 acre farm on the south edge of Aberdeen to evaluate seed production of grasses and legumes under irrigation. That same year, the PMC started an intensive range reseeding study in cooperation with the University of Idaho on land at the Aberdeen Airport.

In 1953, all of the PMC's in the U.S. were ordered closed as a result of a move to phase out the Soil Conservation Service and incorporate its activities into the Cooperative Extension Service. Because of strong support from Conservation Districts, farmers, ranchers, and Congressmen, the Aberdeen PMC was retained. Unfortunately, the owner of the land and buildings used prior to closure set new rental fees beyond the reach of available funds.

Supervisors of the South Bingham Soil Conservation District decided that the PMC needed a permanent home. They found a suitable 45 acre farm 2 miles north of Aberdeen but there was one big hurdle - raising money. The District sought legal advice and then asked other conservation districts in Idaho, Utah and Nevada to loan them the money to buy the farm. The District drew up contracts giving each lender a first mortgage on a percentage-of-loan basis on the farm and a promissory note at four percent to be repaid annually. By June of 1955 the PMC was back in operation. The South Bingham Soil Conservation District has also built all of the buildings at the farm.

Today, the objectives of the PMC are much the same as they were 50 years ago. Not because tremendous progress hasn't been made, but because the demand and need for conservation plants are still great. The search goes on for plants and techniques to control soil erosion on cropland; improve riparian areas and wetlands; and improve poor condition rangeland.