

Knox City Plant Materials Center Celebrates 40 Years of Conservation Excellence

Story and Photos by Randy Henry, Zone 5 Public Affairs Specialist

The Knox City Plant Materials Center (PMC), which is located two miles from Knox City, Texas, celebrated its 40th year serving Texas and southwest Oklahoma since 1964. The PMC is known for discovering superior plants in nature, and mass producing them from seeds brought back to the center from the field. The anniversary celebration was held on August 26, 2004. The Knox City PMC was the first plant materials center established in Texas, and has released 35 new plant cultivars with the technology for their production and use.

The anniversary field day had nearly 200 people in attendance, including ranchers and farmers; local, state and federal government employees; congressional staff members; conservation seed producers; livestock producers and wildlife enthusiasts; and many other individuals interested in conservation.

"The anniversary field day was a great success from seeing people here interested in our conservation efforts," said Morris Houck, facility manager at the Knox City PMC. "Our facility is one of many throughout the nation having successful programs for the evaluation, testing and mass production of seeds from plants in nature."

Among the highlights at the anniversary, two workshops targeting basic plant identification and grass seed drill calibration were attended by many visitors. Also, several Knox City PMC field tour guides escorted guests around the 137.5 acre facility in wagons pulled by tractors identifying various sections of the facility. The field tours showed guests plants grown at the facility for distribution through seed companies, along with volunteer speakers discussing the various plants and their conservation value at selected stops during the tours.

During a lunch program with beef brisket served by the Knox City Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Larry Butler, NRCS Texas State Conservationist, awarded several certificates of appreciation to some NRCS personnel and volunteers that have shown exemplary performance toward conservation with NRCS.

The anniversary field day was a success for all that attended this celebration showing the conservation efforts the Knox City PMC continues to reflect through its technology and production.