

# The Northwest Experiment Station *News*

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## 100th Anniversary of U of M Agricultural Experiment Station 1885 - 1985

The Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station located in St. Paul administers the agricultural research, education and extension in Minnesota. It is also responsible for the five branch stations of which the Northwest Experiment Station at Crookston is one. This whole organization was created by provisions made possible by federal and state legislation.

The MORROW ACT of 1862 created the land grant university. The federal government gave the states land to be used to support higher education for the general public, especially in the fields of agriculture and engineering. The HATCH ACT of 1887 created the agricultural experiment station. The federal and state governments together supply funds for research in the broad area of agriculture.

The SMITH-LEVER ACT of 1914 created the cooperative extension service. This adult education arm of the land grant university is funded by federal, state and county governments.

The Northwest Experiment Station was created in 1895 following a donation of 452 acres of land by James J. Hill, the railroad developer. Classes started at the Northwest School of Agriculture in 1906. The educational facility served a wide area of northwest Minnesota and eastern North Dakota by offering high school

classes. The combined staff of the 1960's, aware of changing times and trends in education and also aware of the needs of current agricultural research, pursued the form of a collegiate educational institution. The Technical College was started in 1966 with Dr. Stanley Sahlstrom being appointed provost of the College and Dr. B.E. Youngquist continuing as superintendent of the Northwest Station. Since that time the College has grown to an institution of approximately 1,000 students.

The first research project at the Experiment Station was started by T.A. Hoverstad in 1897. It was the study of drainage techniques in the cold, wet soil. Tillage practices, examination of crop varieties for the area, and improvement of livestock and poultry were all part of the research in the early eras. Then, as now, major research was accomplished in cooperation with the departments at St. Paul.

The research program at the Experiment Station has expanded ten fold since the middle 50's. Research is currently conducted in the areas of agronomy, soils, dairy, beef & sheep, sugarbeets, plant pathology and natural resources. Over 240 acres of land on the Station is currently dedicated to crop production research.

Forage to fill 11 silos and thousands of bushels of grain are produced each year to provide feed for expanded beef, dairy and sheep research programs. In 1985, the Northwest Experiment Station dairy research herd had the highest DHIA rolling herd average (21,510 lbs. of milk and 738 lbs. of milk fat) of any institutional herd in the State. Station scientists have accomplished many firsts in crop and forage research, livestock production and management techniques from which farmers of the state and nation have benefited.

This special issue of the Northwest Experiment Station Quarterly is dedicated to all of you who were part of the student body, teaching or research staff, and the rural leaders and legislators who insisted upon progress in agriculture. Too, we want to reach all of you with this special issue so that we can celebrate together the accomplishments of the past 100 years of the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station and to look to the challenges of the future.

**Crops And Soils Day - July 17**  
**Details Inside**

This archival publication may not reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations.  
Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

## Smith's Comments



The sound of hammers and the smell of newly painted walls have disappeared with the completion of the remodeling project in the Ag Research Center. For many of you that have sat through meetings in the old auditorium with the cramped seating, poor lighting, ventilation and acoustics, the newly remodeled auditorium will be a pleasant change. Our research and support staff have moved into the new offices in what was classroom 114.

A number of administrative changes have brought new names to the Uni-

versity and new duties for others. Dr. Kenneth Keller became the 12th president of the University of Minnesota in March. Dr. Keller formerly held the position of Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Donald Sargeant was named Chancellor (formerly Provost) of the University of Minnesota Technical College at Crookston succeeding Dr. Stanley D. Sahlstrom who was elected a Regent of the University. Dr. Phil Larsen and Dr. Orvin Burnside have assumed responsibilities as Heads of the Dept. of Plant Pathology and the Dept. of Agronomy and Plant Genetics. Dr. Robert Nyvall became superintendent at the North Central Experiment Station in Grand Rapids on June 1.

The annual Crops and Soils Field Day is set for Wednesday, July 17. This day provides an opportunity for you to visit with research staff from St. Paul and to see what **your** experiment station is doing in the various research areas. A new tour featuring vegetable and small fruit production, varieties, irrigation and weed control will be held in conjunction with the more traditional tours. We hope to see you on July 17.

Legislative action last evening passed the bonding bill, so the dairy research and

## Calendar of Events

Crops & Soils Day  
July 17

- 1986 -

Dairy Day  
Jan. 14

Sugarbeet Meeting - Grafton  
Jan. 28

Sugarbeet Meeting - Grand Forks  
Jan. 29

teaching facility will be a reality. More details in the next issue of Northwest Experiment Station News.

# Agronomic Range Named For Elmer Ausemus

Dr. Elmer R. Ausemus was born in 1895 in Cherokee, Kansas. He graduated from high school in 1912 and served two



years in the U.S. Army. He was discharged in July 1919 as a Sergeant in the Infantry.

He received a degree in genetics from Kansas State College in 1923 and a Masters Degree from Washington State College in 1924 where he worked one year before receiving an appointment with the U.S. Department of Agriculture as an agronomist. He located at the Great Plains Field Station at Mandan, North Dakota.

Ausemus transferred to the University of Minnesota in 1929 where he received his Ph.D. degree in genetics. He was a popular and effective advisor to graduate students from all over the world.

A leader in the development of many new varieties of winter and spring wheat - Minter, Thatcher, Lee and Crim - along with work on selections resistant to black stem rust, Ausemus gave his era New-

thatch, Willet and Frontana x Thatcher selections, plus Kenya 58 and Newthatch combinations. He did early work on Era wheat.

Dr. Elmer R. Ausemus has received many honors including Who's Who, nationally and in Minnesota. He is a fellow in the American Society of Agronomy. He belongs to the American Association for the Advancement of Science and is a member of Gamma Sigma Delta and Sigma Xi.

He retired from the University of Minnesota in 1963 as a professor emeritus.

# Northwest Experiment Station Superintendents

**T.A. Hoverstad (1895 - 1905)**



T.A. Hoverstad was the first superintendent of the Northwest Experiment Station. It was said he arrived in a boxcar with his family, a few cows, some furniture and a plow. It was a cold & soggy land into which he stepped, but he could look around and see many others struggling with the water and the land. By 1898 Hoverstad had agronomy and soils plots started. He found a number of crop varieties that were adaptable to Red River Valley conditions.

Hoverstad literally "burned out" struggling long hours with minimal staff and equipment. He did establish the integrity and usefulness of an Experiment Station for northwest Minnesota. He also laid the groundwork for the Northwest School and secured appropriations for drainage of the Experiment Station land. Honors committees have overlooked Hoverstad as far as naming any buildings for him.

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**William Robertson (1905 - 1910)**

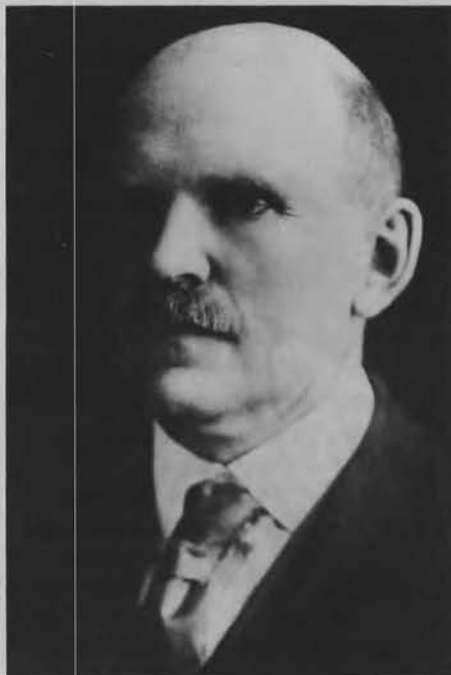
Perhaps five years was enough to serve in those days. If we think that the St. Paul campus and the legislature is a long way off today, it must have seemed near the end of the earth in 1905. Robertson is remembered for his ability to involve local

and state leadership in providing needs for the new school and station.

Robertson was the first superintendent to live in the "white house". The legislature was beginning to support the station, and Robertson, despite his short tenure, redesigned the campus layout, moved the farm buildings to the East and installed a tile drainage system over the entire station. An immediate success, the outlook for continuing research for crop production became encouraging as the land drainage began to function near the close of the decade.

Robertson died enroute to Minneapolis on a mission for the Northwest School and Experiment Station. He was scheduled to appear before a legislative commission on Red River Valley drainage issues.

Robertson Hall was named in his memory. It has served as a girls dormitory, a boys dormitory, a nurses education center and a childrens day care center.



**C.G. Selvig (1910 - 1927)**

Conrad Selvig was an effective public relations man. During his years as superintendent, he brought newsmen and activists to the campus to accomplish his goals. Selvig launched adult education for farmers and their wives before there were county agents in the State. He hired staff members who were not only researchers, but also were leaders in setting up informal educational meetings. He started the Farm Crops Show in 1910 which has evolved into the Red River Valley Winter Shows. Selvig was the chairman of the Red Lake Conservancy District, a multi-county group formed to study and better manage the great water resource lying to the east.

Selvig acquired funds to build many new buildings on the campus during his tenure at Crookston. He resigned to become a U.S. Congressman.

Selvig Hall is named in his honor. The building served as a dormitory for many years and has housed the administration offices of the Technical College since 1966.



## Future Dairy Plans Propose Close Ties With Teaching & Research

Staff members, George Marx & Gene Miller, met recently with a dairy support group that was organized this past year. This group is assisting university personnel with building suggestions and fund-raising activities to secure a new dairy research and education building that would replace the current 80-year old structure at Crookston. A comprehensive study of research and collegiate instruction needs predicated a much-expanded facility. Part of the dairy building will be remodeled and new facilities would also be built to update the current building.

The dairy research program at the Northwest Experiment Station began in 1905. Research conducted at the Station in nutrition, breeding, artificial insemination and forage utilization has helped advance the progress made in the dairy industry of Minnesota over the past 79 years. Minnesota milk sales alone account for over \$1.4 billion dollars of farm income. The Northwest Experiment Station has the highest DHIA rolling herd average (21,510 lbs. of milk and 738 lbs. of milk fat) of any institutional herd in the State.

The agricultural division of the Technical College, headed by Gary McVey, has educational needs that must be met if dairymen in northwest Minnesota are to keep up with the latest methods. Requests for graduate herdsmen and technicians who are familiar with new technology in dairy are received weekly. At the present time, there are not enough graduates in dairy science available to fill

the many positions that are now open. Many students enrolling in agricultural courses have the interest and desire to be part of agriculture, but do not come from farm families.

It is hoped that the new dairy facility will incorporate computerized milk records and daily information on each cow. Over 100 specific techniques are taught each term in the dairy facility ranging from hoof trimming to artificial insemination. Proposed plans include shifting a pipeline milker to the educational portion

to introduce students to milking techniques on a basic level before they encounter the high technology of a complete milking parlor.

In an early agreement, experiment station and technical college administrators agreed that the University would make a major effort to secure private funds to help complete the "high tech" facility and also to set up a scholarship fund for dairy majors. Northwest School of Agriculture and UMC Alumni are urged to consider contributing to this project as well as to the dairy scholarship fund.



*Perham area dairyman who met recently with staff members from the Technical College and Northwest Experiment Station were: (L-R) Steve Mursu, Lyle Dittman, James Arvidson, Bruce Stone, David Richter and Charles Arvidson. Not pictured, but attending were Ray Tisdell, Ron Tobkin, and Denis Braukmann.*

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