The Northwest Experiment Station News

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Gene Miller Retires After 34 Years of Service

Gene Miller, ag engineer and head of information and development at the Northwest Experiment Station, officially retired on May 30, 1986.

Miller started with the University of Minnesota system at Waseca in 1952. He came to Crookston in 1954 where he served as superintendent of buildings and grounds at the Northwest School of Agriculture. He also taught at the school until it became the Technical College in 1966.

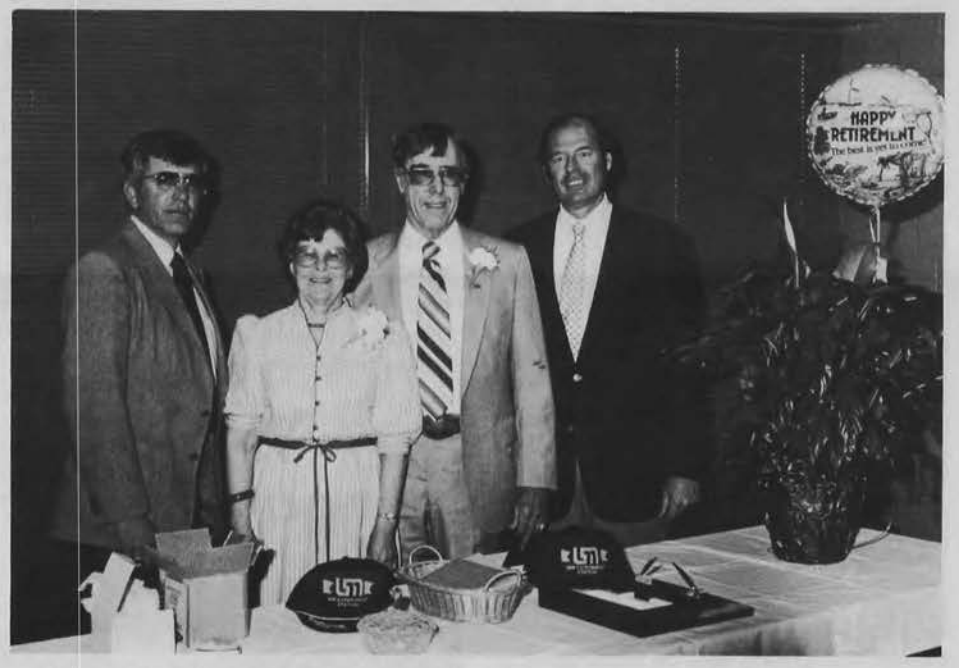
Miller was active in the Minnesota Flying Farmers and taught a class in aeronautics at the Northwest School and wrote the early course material for the UMC agricultural aviation class.

Gene became a full time researcher at the Northwest Experiment Station in 1970. He was involved in developing silo and forage research and headed the agricultural pollution studies. Miller became involved with both ends of the research process during the later years - performing the research and also distributing the information to area constituents.

In recent years Miller has concentrated on the study of alternate forms of energy. He founded the Northern Tier Solar Energy Society and organized and chaired the first national Fibre Fuels Conference at UMC.

At the time of his retirement, he was actively engaged in raising funds for the new dairy, research and education facility being constructed at the Northwest Experiment Station.

His future plans include working with his new business venture and "training a few more horses".



Pictured with Gene and Arline Miller (center) on the occasion of Gene's retirement from the Northwest Experiment Station are (L) Larry Smith, Superintendent, and Don Sargeant (R) Chancellor of the Technical College. Gene and Arline were honored at a retirement coffee for his 34 years of service to the University of Minnesota.

Crops and Soils Day - July 16 Details Inside

Smith's Comments

Retirements, resignations and babies have been the major topics of conversation over coffee the past few weeks. Gene Miller (34) and Elvin Moran (39) are retiring with a combined total of 73 years of service to the University of Minnesota. Julie Hamre, senior secretary, resigned to continue her education, but that education may have to take a back seat for a period of time, as Julie and her husband, Randy, just received word of a long awaited adoption becoming a reality. John Lamb, soil scientist, and his wife, JoAnn, are the proud parents of a baby girl.

Noise and dust are the norm of the day this summer. Construction on the dairy facility is progressing rapidly, remodeling of the restrooms in the Ag Research Center for handicap access in nearing completion, and repaving of the street and water line replacement in front of the Research Center is just beginning. It's a good thing this building has a back door.

The agronomy, soils and plant pathology research trials, after a slow start due to the wet spring conditions, are progressing rapidly. The later plantings and warm June temperatures may reduce yield of the wheat and barley crops. However the row crops on the station, sugarbeets, corn and soybeans, have progressed rapidly with the warm temperatures and are in excellent condition. The corn was "knee high" and approximately half of the sugarbeets covered the row by June 18. Now if all the old proverbs are right, we should harvest 150 bu corn and 30 ton sugarbeets---if it rains, if it doesn't hail, if it doesn't get too hot or cold, if,--if,--if,.

The annual Crops and Soils Day is set for Wednesday, July 16. This is an opportunity for you to see what your Experiment Station is doing in the various research arenas. We hope to see you on July 16.

Calendar of Events

- 1986 -

Crops & Soils Day - July 16

Range Honors Program - July 16

Beef Cattlemen's Institute
October 30

Sheep Day - November
Deef Cattle Day - December

- 1987 -

Dairy Day - January 13, 1987

International Sugarbeet Growers Institute - March 18 & 19, 1987

Agronomic Range Named For Bernie Youngquist

Former superintendent of the Northwest Experiment Station, Crookston, Dr. Bernie Youngquist, will be honored at a range naming ceremony on Wednesday, July 16, 2 P.M. on the North Farm of the Experiment Station.

Dr. Bernie Youngquist, a native of Finlayson, Minnesota, received his B. S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Minnesota. He wrote his doctorial thesis on the changes inherent in the then "Schools of Agriculture" and possible conversion to collegiate programs.

Bernie joined the University of Minnesota staff in 1946 at the West Central School and Experiment Station at Morris, Minnesota and served there until selected to initiate a new School of Agriculture at Waseca, Minnesota in 1952.

Arriving at the Crookston campus in 1956, Youngquist presided over the last years of the successful Northwest School of Agriculture, laid the early college philosophy and directed agricultural research into the new challenges of the era, a tour of 27 years. Land acquisition, which Bernie pursued vigorously, was a major factor in the present research capability at the Northwest Experiment Station.

Previous honors and awards are many. Youngquist received the Honorary State Farmer Award from the Minnesota Future Farmers of America, The Partners in 4-H Award from the 4-H Foundation and the Seal of the State Award for his river basin commission work. He has also been elected to the Red River Valley Winter Shows Hall of Fame.

The public is invited to attend the Range Naming Ceremony on Wednesday, July 16, 2 P.M. North Farm (1¼ miles north of the campus corner on Hwy 75).

Resignations, Retirements & Honors

Julie Hamre, research staff secretary at the Northwest Experiment Station since 1978, resigned effective June 30. Julie has been an excellent member of the secretarial staff. She saw many changes in her position including the addition of the CPT word processor which enabled her to complete the many research papers in a shorter amount of time.

Julie was planning to further her education, but that may have to be postponed for a while as Julie and her husband, Randy, received word of a long awaited adoption. The staff and superintendent of the Northwest Experiment Station wish Julie, Randy and Dominic the best of everything in the future and thanks, Julie, for a job well done.

Superintendent Larry Smith (L) presented a plaque to Gene Miller for his many years of service to the University of Minnesota at the 10th Annual Employee Recognition Banquet held recently.

Miller was the ag engineer and head of the information and development offices at the Northwest Experiment Station and retired recently (see story elsewhere in paper).

When O. M. Kaiser approached Elvin Moran about working at the Northwest School of Agriculture and Experiment Station in the summer of 1947, Elvin agreed to help out as he was undecided about what to do now that he had returned from the service.

His future is more definite now as Elvin has decided to retire from his position as farm foreman on August 31 after 39 years with the Northwest Station.

Elvin was presented a plaque by Supt. Larry Smith (L) at the 10th Annual Employee Recognition Banquet for his many years of devoted service.

Spending 35 years at one job is very commendable and Lawrence (Jerome) Sirek has done just that.

Supt. Larry Smith (L) presented Jerome with a gold watch for his many years of service at the 10th Annual Employee's Recognition Banquet held recently.

Jerome started at the Northwest Experiment Station in 1951. He is a senior farm animal technician in the beef and sheep department.

Soils Research on the Move

Soybean production in northwestern Minnesota has had several major setbacks in the past few years because of poor yields caused by adverse weather during the growing season, falling soybean prices, detrimental herbicide residues to following crops and poor cultural practices. Two of the main limitations to more efficient soybean production are lack of nitrogen-fixing nodule formation and iron chlorosis during early spring caused by the cool, waterlogged, highly calcareous soil conditions found in northwest Minnesota.

Currently, we are in the third year of the nitrogen rate x inoculation study funded by the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council. The overall objectives of this study are to measure the effects of residual soil N, fertilizer N, seed inoculation, and the interactions of these three variables on soybean production. Research locations were established in 1984, 1985 and 1986 on farmers' fields with no history of soybean production in Marshall, Polk, Pennington and Norman Counties. These locations were selected due to their unique characteristics of varying residual soil N and textures ranging from sandy loam to silty clay.

Preliminary results indicate soil N levels do influence yield response to N fertilizer in northwestern Minnesota. Also some unknown factor besides high soil N levels is restricting the plant's ability to produce nitrogen-fixing nodules.

The observations of poor nodulation, even with the presence of viable rhizobia bacteria being supplied at planting, along with severe Fe chlorosis lead to the initiation of additional fertility work in 1986 with added support received from the Minnesota Soybean Council. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate low and neutral pH fertilizers as carriers for micronutrients at planting. The high pH soils of the Valley, coupled with cold wet soil conditions in the spring, may cause problems with Fe and Zn nutrition which ultimately may effect nodule formation. The problem of Fe chlorosis is not caused by a lack of Fe in the soil, but the unavailability of Fe in a usable form caused by these soil conditions during early spring. Past experience has shown foliar applications of Fe will not give consistent results. The cultural practice of planting soybeans in rows to facilitate cultivation which will dry and warm the soil seems to be the best treatment we have today to correct Fe chlorosis.

Ultimately, we hope to determine if low or neutral pH fertilizer increases the early uptake of Zn and Fe in the plant and has any effect on reducing Fe chlorosis or stimulating nodule formation along with nigrogen-fixation.

The 1986 research trials being conducted on the Dwight Anderson farm in Marshall County and the Lynn Johnson farm in Norman County are contrasting a sandy loam with a silty clay loam soil respectively. A third site in 1986 is located at the St. Hilaire Elevator Anhydrous Ammonia Fertilizer Station in cooperation with the elevator's agronomist, Paul Gregor. The soils project at the Northwest Experiment Station is definitely on the move in northwest Minnesota in search of unlocking the mysteries of soybean fertility in northwest Minnesota.

We would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the farmer cooperators who have unselfishly provided the land to conduct these research trials the past three years. Our 1984 cooperators were Ronald Peterson, Fisher and Roger Buchholz, McIntosh. During 1985 Verdell Olson, Fertile; Roger Geddes, Ada; Ronald Peterson, Fisher and David Amundgaard, Warren provided research land. We also thank the county agents for their help in locating these fine cooperators -- Ray Thompson, Marshall County; Ken Pazdernik, Norman County, and Howard Person, Pennington County, formerly East Polk County.

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