

BREEDER RECOGNIZED FOR RECEIVING PATENT ON PERSIST

Tennessee: February 2009

"Dr. Bob Conger, professor emeritus from the Department of Plant Sciences, (was recognized for receiving) a Plant Variety Protection Patent for 'Persist' orchardgrass. This patent represents 50 years of discovery and plant breeding work. Conger assumed work on the project in 1976. **'Persist,' which does exactly what its name says, outperforms other cool-season orchard grass varieties.** When measured against the check variety, it achieved a ~80 percent stand six years beyond planting compared to a 10-20 percent stand by the check variety.

Dr. Conger said of developing Persist that it is "the capstone" of his career!

'Persist' has performed well at the southern adaption range for cool-season grasses, such as southwestern Tennessee, where it was evaluated at UT's AgResearch and Education Center at Ames Plantation. In Kentucky, it was the top producer in yield trials at two locations for two years. It has also been a top yield producer in trials in Nebraska, Illinois and Pennsylvania, especially in later years of the trials, emphasizing the persistence. This is encouraging because 'Persist' was bred to extend the southern boundary for growing orchardgrass. It is now being grown in the U.S. and recently was adopted in Argentina, which is known for producing premium quality beef."



"Awarded patents are critical to the university. Patents are an indication of the innovative people and programs at the university, which attract external funding from both government granting agencies as well as from industry. The funding, in turn, attracts best-in-class faculty and students. Patents also have the potential to generate licensing revenue for the university and can be the basis for starting new companies, which contributes to economic development," explained Fred Tompkins, president and CEO of the UT Research Foundation.
– The University of Tennessee