

2018 American Oat Workers Conference
Award for Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement



Joseph 'Paul' Murphy

Dr. Paul Murphy is a Small Grains Breeder and Professor of Crop and Soil Sciences at North Carolina State University. He serves as Associate Director of the NC State Plant Breeding Consortium. Paul is also a member of the SUNGRAINS six-university small grains breeding cooperative. Paul's interest in agriculture grew out of working in a malt house / elevator business in the midlands of Ireland. He graduated with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree from University College Dublin in 1975 and continued his education at Iowa State University where he obtained MS and PhD degrees working with Dr. Ken Frey's oat breeding program, supported by funding from the Quaker Oat Company. Paul took over the small grains program at NC State in 1984 after Dr. Chuck Murphy moved to the USDA-ARS in Washington DC.

During his 34 year (and counting) career at N.C. State, Paul has made significant contributions to oat and wheat breeding and genetics. He developed 12 improved varieties of oat which have been utilized in the conventional, deer food and malting sectors. He has also co-developed a number of additional oat varieties as a member of the Sungrains.

Paul made his first trip to Washington DC with the American Oat Association in 1986, lobbying for increased oat research funding, and he continued in that role for over 20 years. He served as Chair of

the American Oat Association from 2002-06, and organized the American Oat Conference in Wilmington, NC in 2002. Paul conducted research on the genetic relationships within and between the *Avena sterilis* and *Avena sativa* germplasm collections, and improvement of winter-hardiness in oats.

In recognition of his numerous contributions Paul was named a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and the Crop Science Society of America in 2008. Paul received the Outstanding Service Award from the North Carolina Small Grain Growers in 2012. Among his fellow small grain workers, Paul is known to be the most generous scientist in terms of contributing to the greater good of the enterprise. One example of this is that fact that he has returned to D.C. every year since that initial lobbying trip in 1986 to seek additional funding for ARS programs that benefit the broader small grains community.

Paul is married to Beverly and they have a daughter, Ashling, who aspires to be a better trap shooter than her father. The family enjoys spending time at their cottage on the west coast of Ireland.

Paul is highly deserving of the Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement Award due to his many contributions to oat improvement, including development of improved varieties, and understanding of oat genetics, and training graduate students as plant breeders.