

From the Oat Newsletter, volume 48, 2002:

Dr. Charles (Chuck) Murphy – USDA-ARS
Award for Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement



Chuck Murphy has oat improvement in his genes. His father, H. C. Murphy, was a leader for oat improvement with the USDA and the tetraploid species *Avena murphyii* was named in his honor. Chuck began working in oat nurseries while a high school student in Ames, Iowa, and continued on an annual basis throughout his undergraduate days at Iowa State University. He obtained the Master's of Science and Ph.D. degrees at Purdue and Iowa State Universities, respectively, working on oats under the direction of Dr. Fred Patterson and Dr. Ken Frey.

Chuck took the position of Assistant Professor of Crop Science and Small Grains Breeder at North Carolina State University in 1961. His early research on oats involved the use of mutagenic agents in oat improvement and studies on the genetics and heritability of yield components. During his tenure at N. C. State, Chuck released five oat cultivars, in addition to four wheat and four barley cultivars. His 1978 oat cultivar release, 'Brooks', is still grown extensively in North Carolina and is regarded as the standard by the horse industry in the region against which all other cultivars are compared

Chuck joined the USDA's National Program Staff in Beltsville in 1983 with responsibility for grain crops. In the intervening years, until his retirement two years ago, Chuck's influence on maintaining scope and innovation in oat research at both the federal and state levels was enormous. It is well known to both the oat, and non-oat, research communities that Chuck's first love throughout his career was oats; and, as oat researchers, we benefited in particular from having Chuck in this leadership position. He tirelessly promoted basic and applied oat research, particularly in the areas of alternative uses for oats through exploitation of its genetic versatility. He was a key ally

in developing National Strategic Oat Plans; he provided insight and helped develop strategy for numerous oat legislative delegations to Capitol Hill. The successes we have had in implementing many aspects of the Strategic Plans were greatly influenced by Chuck's assistance. There is no question that without Chuck Murphy's initiative, insight, and enthusiasm, current levels of oat research in the United States, at both the federal and state levels, would be greatly diminished.

For a most productive and influential career spanning from high school to retirement, Dr. Charles (Chuck) Murphy is a most deserving recipient of this award in recognition of his efforts in making oats a successful agricultural species.