

From the National Oat Newsletter, volume 6, 1955:

Hazel Lee Shands
"Oat Man of The Year".

by T. R. Stanton

The undersigned wishes to nominate Dr. Hazel Lee Shands of the University of Wisconsin as "Oat Man of The Year" for 1955, for his achievement in the breeding of Sauk, a new oat variety of much potential promise on the basis of its performance to date. In Iowa where it has been very promising Sauk led all other varieties in acreage certified in 1955 with 11,500 acres.

Sauk was selected by Dr. Shands and associates from a hybrid combination of (Forward x Victoria - Richland) x Andrew, the first cross being made in 1935 and the second one in 1942. The selection later named Sauk was extensively increased at Madison, Wisconsin, in 1953, and distributed in 1954 by the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station to approximately 275 growers of certified seed in Wisconsin; thus making available an abundance of seed, not only for further distribution in Wisconsin in 1955, but for growing in adjoining states as well.

Sauk's high productiveness and satisfactory resistance to several destructive diseases are its most outstanding characteristics. The test weight, however, is slightly lower than that of the Branch variety. Sauk has a short, stiff straw which is very desirable in a midseason to late variety to prevent lodging. The lemmas (grains) are yellow and similar in form to those of Vicland. It is resistant to Victoria blight and race 7 of stem rust, but susceptible to race 8 of this rust. Sauk has protective resistance to crown rust and is highly resistant to most races of oat smuts. It also is resistant to Septoria black stem.

Dr. Shands was born at Landrum, South Carolina, October 9, 1908, and is one of four brothers all of whom are professional scientists. He received the B.S. degree from Clemson College, Clemson, South Carolina, in 1929. He earned his Ph.D. degree at the University of Wisconsin in 1932 (majoring in agronomy and plant pathology) in which institution he has served as an assistant in agronomy, 1929-33; research associate in plant pathology, 1933-37; assistant professor of agronomy, 1937-42; associate professor of agronomy, 1942-46; and professor of agronomy 1946--.

Dr. Shands principal research has been in the pathology, genetics and breeding of oats. He also has had part in similar research on barley, winter wheat, and rye. In oats, his most important productions in addition to Sauk, have been the older Vicland and Branch, and the much newer Bendee and Fayette varieties. Vicland was the most widely and extensively grown of the famous Victoria - Richland oats. They were the first varieties to be distributed in the United States with a combination of protective resistance to the rusts and smuts of oats with highly desirable agronomic characters.

Dr. Shands also has had part in the development of several improved varieties of barley, winter wheat, and rye. Furthermore, although still a relatively young man, he has played an important role in the training of many graduate students in plant breeding and agronomy.

Dr. Shands has served on several committees of the Plant Science Division of the American Society of Agronomy, as well as appearing on its programs. He served as chairman of the first National Oat Conference held in connection with the American Society of Agronomy meetings, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in November, 1950. Without his initiative, foresight and perseverance, it is doubtful if the National Oat Conference as well as its organ, the National Oat Newsletter, would have been launched at that time.

Dr. Shands was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy in 1955, in part, as recognition of his outstanding contributions to oat improvement. He has a long list of publications.