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## **TEXAS A&M PROFESSOR RECEIVES COTTON GENETICS AWARD**

SAN ANTONIO (Special) -- Dr. Luther S. Bird, professor emeritus of cotton pathology, genetics and breeding at Texas A&M University, is the recipient of the 1994 Cotton Genetics Award.

The announcement was made during the National Cotton Council-sponsored Beltwide Cotton Production Conference at the San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter Hotel.

The Cotton Genetics Award has been presented for the past 33 years by U.S. commercial cotton breeders to a scientist for outstanding basic research in cotton genetics. Criteria for the award are established by the Joint Cotton Breeding Policy Committee comprised of representatives from state experiment stations, USDA, private breeders and the Council.

Dr. Bird has made numerous contributions to the cotton industry during his 36 years of service (1950-1986) with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. Most notably, he helped pioneer the use of host plant resistance to control cotton diseases. His early successes included development of varieties that were resistant to bacterial blight.

His strong interest in using host resistance for controlling diseases ultimately led to the development of an entirely new approach for the genetic improvement of cotton -- the multi-adversity (MAR) system. The unique aspects of this system have been documented many times and the fact that it is still effectively used today is testimony of its effectiveness.

Dr. Bird's program had a profound effect on the Texas cotton industry. The introduction of integrated pest management programs combined with short season production systems centered around his MAR varieties helped many Texas growers to once again make cotton a profitable enterprise.

Dr. Bird earned his bachelor's degree from Clemson University and received master's and doctorate degrees from Texas A&M. He has been on the Texas A&M faculty since 1950 and was a veteran of World War II before retiring as a lieutenant colonel from the Air Force.

"Dr. Bird's keen insight regarding varietal response to such adversities as environmental stress, insect and disease damage has been invaluable to cotton specialists," said Dr. James Supak, Extension Agronomist for the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and one of Dr. Bird's nominators. "His dedication and tireless efforts have won him the respect of not only Extension and research personnel, but also of seedsmen across the Cotton Belt."

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