



Mr. Tom Deberry

2010 Agriculture Educators Lifetime Achievement Award

Tom grew up in Camden County on a dairy farm and cow-calf operation. He and his brother still have the 600 acre farm near Richland, MO.

Tom attended Southwest Missouri State University and obtained a B.S. in Soils. After time in the Army, Tom joined the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 1968 in Carthage, MO. In 1971 he became the District Conservationist (D.C.) in Montgomery City.

Tom was the government representative on levee reclamation and river bottom restoration after the 1973 flood on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. In 1978 he became D.C. for the Scotland County SCS where he worked with the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) on soil and water conservation practices to protect erodible cropland.

In the 1980's, state cost share funds became available for conservation practices and the 1985 farm bill went into effect. Soil and water conservation plans had to be written on highly erodible farms participating in government programs. Tom and his staff assisted landowners to implement their conservation plans enabling them to qualify for state cost share funds.

The 1985 Farm Bill also included the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Tom worked diligently to enroll landowners in the program. He also assisted the Fox River Ecodevelopment project secure funding for a project through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and assisted the Scotland SWCD access funding for soil and water conservation practices in this watershed.

In 1997, Tom was named Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Coordinator for the NEMO RC&D Project Area. Numerous educational meetings were held to explain how RC&D could help with resource conservation and development. He worked closely with SWCD's, Regional Planning, Department of Conservation and others to secure funding for projects. The efforts resulted in the construction of numerous dams on county roads to replace small bridges.

Tom was also instrumental in securing Neighborhood Assistance Program Tax Credit projects to buy and remodel the Scotland County Community Fitness Center gymnasium. Additionally, a water quality grant was approved for the Fox River Watershed Project to fund a coordinator for conservation practices.

Tom retired from USDA/NRCS after 39 years of service. He is a life member of the NRA and his passion for hunting has taken him to numerous states, Alberta, Saskatchewan and South Africa.

He is a past member of Quail Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, Lions Club and the Soil and Water Conservation Society. He is a member of the Scotland County Rotary Club, Board Chair of the Scotland County Care Center and Residential Care Facility, Board Vice Chair of the Scotland County Community Fitness Center, Bank of Memphis board member, Tiger Trail Team chair and has volunteered many hours to the Scotland County Antique Fair.

Tom and his wife Sherry continue to live in Memphis where he continues his interest in soil and water conservation.

The Missouri Livestock Symposium salutes Tom Deberry on an outstanding professional career and for his continued service to our communities. We are pleased to bestow Tom Deberry with the Agriculture Educators Lifetime Achievement Award!