

USDA scientist receives research honor

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Richard D. Durbin, who found a key to understanding why microbes cause plant diseases, was recently named "Scientist of the Year," a new award at the U.S. Department of

Agriculture. Terry B. Kinney, Jr., administrator of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, will present plaques to Durbin and regional winners, at a senior staff conference here Nov. 16. In addition to

the plaque, Durbin will receive \$5,000 in cash and up to \$40,000 in equipment and other support for his research.

Durbin is a plant pathologist and specializes in plant disease resistance for the USDA at Madison, Wis.

A panel of scientists from outside the USDA agency selected Durbin for the top honor from among the regional winners. Durbin works in the research agency's north central region.

Other regional winners are Richard R. Hill, agronomist, University Park, Pa., northeast; James E. Duffus, plant pathologist, Salinas, Calif., western; and Paul E. Bishop, microbiologist, Raleigh, N.C., southern.

Kinney said Durbin is the first scientist to win the new national award, which USDA established to honor "distinguished scientists for their contributions to agriculture, although they often work quietly behind the scenes with little fanfare."

The goal is to encourage research excellence in critical food and agricultural sciences.

"Studies started by Durbin in 1967 have led to increasing science's understanding of the control of plant diseases caused by toxins or poisons that parasitic microbes secrete in plants," said Kinney.

Durbin and his colleagues were the first to correctly determine the structure of tab-toxin.



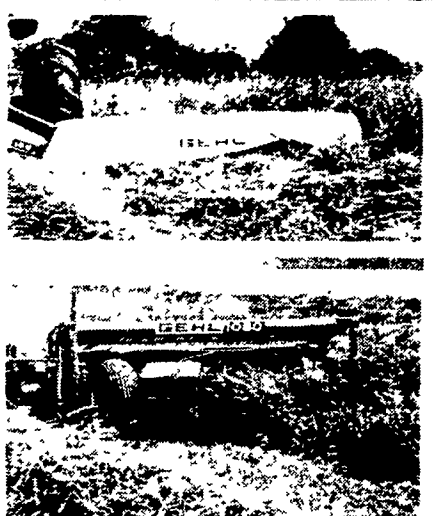
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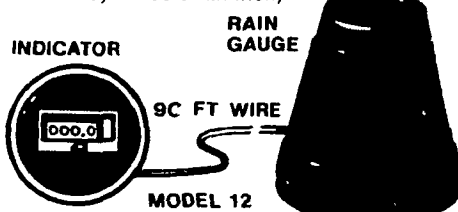
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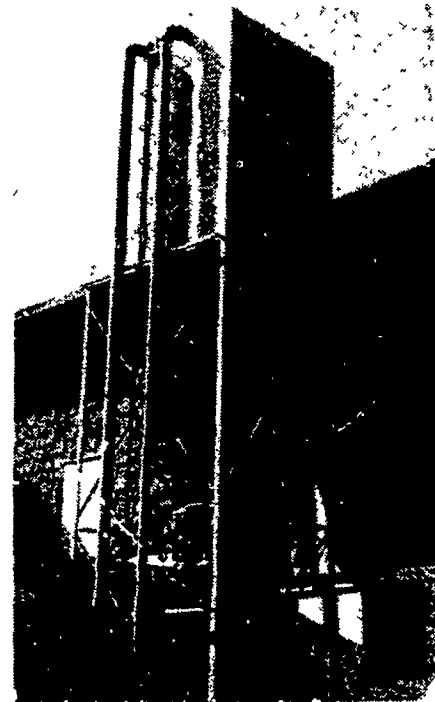
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