SCS Sets Open House

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The Soil Conservation Service's (SCS's) Plant Material Center at Big Flats, New York, celebrates the expansion of its plant development capabilities with an open house and tour of the new greenhouse, laboratory, and seed processing facility on Thursday, July 8. A dedication ceremony takes place between 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

The Big Flats Plant Material Center (PMC) is one of 26 centers operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to find vegetative solutions to conservation problems in varied topographic and climatic regions throughout the country. Established in 1940, the Big Flats Center serves the northeastern states from Pennsylvania to Maine.

Since 1960, the center has been devoted solely to developing improved plants to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, improve forage and pastureland, and stabilize and repair shorelines, stream, and roadbanks.

"This 203-acre facility is equipped for the collection, testing, and release of superior plants to contribute to the national SCS effort to protect and enhance the environment," said Martin van der Grinten, Plant Materials center manager.

"Our 'Chemung' crownvetch, a familiar sight on northeastern roadsides, provides stabilizing

cover with no mowing and little maintenance. 'Lathco' flatpea for erosion control is widely used in the United States and is being introduced in China to solve major erosion along the Yellow River. 'Streamco' willow is a favorite of fishermen because of its ability to stabilize sloping streambanks, protecting trout habitat," van der Grinten said. "Our 'Eastern' Gamma Grass will improve forage for livestock while keeping pastureland under permanent grass cov-

To develop conservation plants, scientists at the PMC's:

Determine which methods or plants might have potential for solving high-priority problems

and collect as many variations of the plants as possible.

Evaluate the methods and collections at the PMC's and select superior ones to test further on actual problem sites.

Make the best plants available to the public after selection by providing genetically pure material and production information to

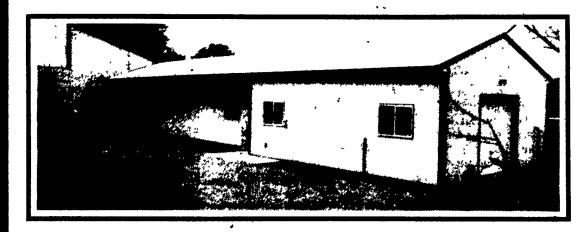
commercial growers.

Carry out a public information campaign to announce the availability of the new plants or methods.

Federal, state and local legislators and officials are expected to attend the dedication as well as former and present scientists associated with the center.



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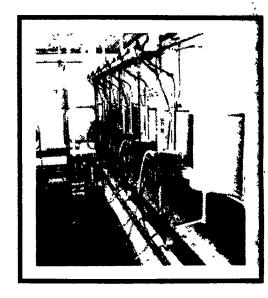
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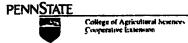
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