

July 30, 2007

News Release

USWBSI Mourns Loss of Co-Chair Tom Anderson

Tom Anderson, co-chair of the U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI), passed away July 23 following a lengthy battle with cancer.

Anderson, 59, a Barnesville, Minn., wheat grower, was a leader in obtaining initial federal and state of Minnesota funding for Fusarium Head Blight (scab) research in the mid-1990s. He also was instrumental in establishing the U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI) in the late '90s and served as the national initiative's co-chair since its founding. His positive attitude and unwavering dedication to the USWBSI were illustrated by his attendance at the late May meeting of its steering committee in Lexington, Ky.

"Tom's cheerful, optimistic spirit remained intact to the end," said Anderson's co-chair and University of Kentucky wheat breeder David Van Sanford. "When we spoke a few days before his death, he talked of helping his son with the upcoming wheat harvest.

"It is simply a statement of fact to say that without Tom Anderson, there would have been no U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative," Van Sanford continued. "His contributions were enormous. Equally important were the contributions that he made to the lives of those who knew him."

Anderson had a longstanding passion for serving on agricultural boards and committees. Along with his USWBSI involvement, he was chairman of the Minnesota Small Grains Research and Communications Committee, and also was

a member of the Sugarbeet Research & Education Board of Minnesota & North Dakota for several years.

The Minnesota farmer was recently honored for his work as chairman of the Research Partners Group of the USDA-ARS Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center from 2000 to 2006. He received numerous other awards as well during his career, including the Outstanding Agriculturist Award from his alma mater, North Dakota State University, as well as the Torch and Shield Award from the University of Minnesota.

Anderson, who will be eulogized during the USWBSI's 2007 National Fusarium Head Blight Forum in December, is survived by his wife, Kirsten, son Paul and daughter Melissa.

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