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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seed Testing Lab Director at Cornell Named President of Professional Society for Second Time

By Joe Ogradnick

GENEVA, NY: Ellen M. Chirco, director of the New York State Seed Testing Laboratory (NYSSTL) at Cornell University at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES) in Geneva, NY, recently assumed the duties of the president of the Association of Official Seed Analysts (AOSA), for the second time. In 1986, when she served as the association's president for the first time, Chirco had the distinction of being only the second woman to serve as its president in that association's 62-year history.

The highlight of Chirco's first tenure as president was the 11th Pan American Seed Seminar in Cali, Columbia, where she represented AOSA and became acquainted with Barbara McClintock, Nobel laureate and Cornell graduate. Chirco also represented AOSA at the 21st International Seed Testing Association Congress in Brisbane, Australia in 1986.

"Seed testing has been a global experience for me," said Chirco, who has served as the director of NYSSTL since 1989. She supervises seed testing activities on all seed samples submitted for analyses, and noted, "My greatest career challenge has been keeping the NYSSTL in operation. Unlike most state seed laboratories, the NYSSTL is not fully subsidized."

Seed testing has been conducted at the NYSAES since 1882, but the NYSSTL was not established as a regulatory laboratory until 1912, when the first New York State Seed Law went into effect. Chirco's expertise has helped establish the national reputation of the NYSSTL. As a result of her seed research, over 50 new testing rules have been proposed and adopted by AOSA. She has also been active in regional, national, and international seed testing workshops.

The NYSSTL is the official seed testing laboratory for the state and provides seed testing services for residents, growers and seed companies. The seed laboratory is affiliated with the department of horticultural sciences at Geneva. The NYSSTL serves as an unbiased third party to resolve disputes between buyers and sellers of seeds, provides specialized quality tests designed for New York growers, and conducts testing for regulatory enforcement of truth in labeling laws for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

"I accepted the responsibilities of AOSA again as part of my quest to educate the agricultural community about the need for strong seed-testing programs in all states," Chirco said.

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Pictures are linked to hi-res scans



Ellen M. Chirco

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