In 1989, Sam Bigger joined the staff of the Northwest Experiment Station on a part time basis as assistant director for development.

Bigger was well known in northwest Minnesota having been the West Polk County Extension Director for 23 years. He was involved in the Red River Valley Winter Shows, Greenbush Sheep Days, Beef Cattlemen’s Institute, Sugar beet Growers Institute, as well as many other local, state and national organizations.

Dr. C. Eugene Allen was appointed vice president for the Institute of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics, and director of the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station in 1990.

In 1990, Dr. John Wiersma reported that recent studies had estimated that nearly three-fourths of the yield gains achieved by Minnesota early spring barley growers during the last 40 years can be attributed to improved varieties. Barley grain yields in northwest Minnesota have increased almost 300 percent since the early 1920’s. Little change occurred prior to 1960, but yield increased dramatically during the 1960’s, 1970’s and 1980’s.

Without question, varieties recently released by the barley breeding project of the University of Minnesota, under the direction of Dr. D.C. Rasmusson, had provided the genetic potential for exceptional progress. The Northwest Experiment Station is pleased to have had the opportunity to play an important role in developing and testing these varieties.

Dr. George Marx was elected President of the Red River Valley Winter Shows at their November, 1990, meeting. Marx has been in charge of the Dairy Day committee and show for over 25 years.

Dr. Gary McVey answers questions about commercial vegetable growing in northwest Minnesota.

Plans were made in November, 1990, to begin a commercial vegetable research project. Dr. Gary McVey headed the project.

In April, 1991, Dr. John Lamb, soil scientist at the Station, resigned to accept a position as soil scientist of the Management Systems Evaluation Area with the Northern Cornbelt Sand Plains project at St. Paul.

Dr. George Marx reported in November, 1991, that his tests showed sunflower seeds supply high energy in dairy rations. Most of the energy in sunflower seed is derived from the high fat content and is the reason for the high TDN content which ranges from 95 to 105 percent in the seed.

Dr. John Wiersma reported that 1992 was a very good year for small grain production in Minnesota in general and northwest Minnesota in particular. A recent state summary released by the Minnesota Agricultural Statistics Service reported record-setting yields for barley (75 bu/a) and near record yields for spring wheat (50 bu/a). In northwest Minnesota, producer reports of barley yields greater than 100 bu/a and wheat yields greater than 60 bu/a were common.

December, 1992, Dr. Michael Martin was hired as associate dean of research, College of Agriculture, and assistant director of the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station.

Earl Carlson, general maintenance supervisor, retired May 17, 1993, after serving 29 years.