

Agenda Item 10.0: National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee

Presenters: Lee Sommers/Eric Young

Background:

The National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee (NPGCC) met in Beltsville, MD on June 19, 2012 at the USDA/ARS George Washington Carver Center. The meeting attendees were Lee Sommers, Jerry Arkin, Ed Knipping, Ed Kaleikau, David Baltensperger, Joe Colletti, Gary Pederson, Dan Upchurch, Peter Bretting, Ann Marie Thro, Thomas Burr, Tim Cupka, Eric Young, and Kay Simmons. Below are some highlights of the presentations and discussion.

1. Ed Knipping

- National Germplasm Resources Advisory Council (NGRAC) re-established officially in April, first meeting this summer or fall
 - NPGCC connected through Peter and Gary as ex-officio members
 - Scope is on all life forms
 - Focus on plants because motivation for establishing it is deregulation of GMO alfalfa
 - Council will be standing subcommittee of NAREEA Board
 - Forum for coordination and stakeholder input as well as advisory to Secretary
- NPGS remains a core program of ARS
- Global food security is high priority for government and germplasm is key
- ARS budget – 7-8% reduction over past two years
- Genetic resources program has been mostly protected from cuts
- Closing 10 locations this year due to cuts, Palmer, AK is only germplasm facility and its collection is being moved to Pullman & Corvallis
- FY'13 budget so far looks flat
- Senate Ag Committee has asked GAO to assess how well ARS and NIFA are coordinating with each other and avoiding duplication. NPGCC is great example
- Chavondra Jacobs-Young is new Associate Admin for National Programs
- Is there a change in focus of breeding? Some shift to nutrition traits and biotic/abiotic stress resistance, but yield is still high priority.
 - In private sector big push is toward crop stability through stress resistance, particularly through national tolerance rather than GMO.
- Free exchange of international germplasm and data sharing is high priority of administration

2. Peter Bretting

- 5-year retrospective review for 2006-2011 has been completed and reports are on web at link in PowerPoint
- Review panel met only virtually on conference call
 - Advantage – able to have international members
 - Disadvantage – less informed interaction and hard to schedule across time zones
- Commented that NPGS needs to do a customer satisfaction survey but OMB regulations on surveys are very complicated so haven't done one
- New Action Plan for national program 301 has been developed and is on ARS website

- Covers 2013-2017
- NPGS will now include microbial collections
- NPGS would like to obtain microbial collections from retiring scientists if that collection is not going to be maintained by university
- Still negotiating with APHIS to reduce cost of phytosanitary certificates for exported samples
- Possibility of making requestor pay this fee
- Dutch genebank is looking into charging a 50 Euro fee per distribution packet
- International discussion on this topic is occurring
- International accession trips are still possible in former Soviet Union republics, and North African countries, other countries are difficult or impossible

3. Gary Pederson

- GRIN- Global training is occurring and programmers are fixing bugs
- Not ready yet but making progress
- PGOOC would like to ask international requestors to pay for sanitary certificate fees directly to APHIS with some consideration for developing countries.
- Would start in 2014 and only apply for samples that go through Beltsville
- PGOOC will not meet in 2013 due to budget cuts, next meeting in spring 2014 in Davis, CA
- Distributions so far this year are very high, for S-9 it already equals all of 2011 distributions

4. Ann Marie Thro

- NIFA is getting a lot of inquiries about increasing support of plant variety improvement
- New REE Action Plan includes plant variety improvement in multiple places
- Stakeholder session at ASHS on August 1 in Miami
 - How would you manage awards to support breeding?
 - How to manage lack of competitiveness?
 - Should we document public investment?
 - Should we document demand for public cultivars?
 - What is role of public plant breeders?
- Looking for a novel way of funding plant breeding in a sustainable manner, which is difficult in normal AFRI mechanisms

5. Ed Kaleikau

- AFRI guidelines for grants related to germplasm and variety improvement to include curator in proposal development early

6. Tim Cupka – ASTA Liaison

- Training and retaining breeders is a huge issue for industry
- Need combination of classical selection and genomic analysis in training and practice
- Hiring more international students so it's harder to retain them
- How can industry help with germplasm distribution?
- Industry is currently subsidizing education of many breeders
- Final draft of International Seed Federation documents on intellectual property rights has been released and ASTA support it.
 - Patents and PVP's require permission from owner for use.
 - No farmer saved seed with patented traits

7. Chavondra Jacobs-Young
 - NSTC Interagency Working Group has been established to coordinate work in plant and animal germplasm
8. David Baltensperger– NAPB Liaison
 - Meeting August 6-8 in Indianapolis
 - TAMU is now the accountant for organization and will be transferring official accounting structure to ACCESS (ASA-CSSA-SSSA umbrella organization) by the end of the year.
 - Conference will focus on international breeding
 - CSSA is doing a policy white paper on plant breeding and germplasm, with the help of many NAPB members
 - Distance education program for plant breeding at Ph.D. Level to be launched by TAMU in Jan.
9. NGRAC & NPGCC
 - NGRAC has only had one organizational conference call
 - Appears that agenda items from NPGCC may be suggested through Peter and Gary
10. Wheat MTA
 - Colorado State, Kansas State, Oklahoma State, and Texas A&M University signed original MTA, other states have joined since then
 - ESCOP will post document on web site and keep list of signers
 - Some discussion on a master research agreement, but that was too complicated
 - Plant breeders are currently reviewing it at 4 universities
 - Once it's all finalized it will be put on web
 - Participation in regional variety traits used to mean any participant could take germplasm for use, but now they are for testing only
11. New Chair
 - Lee is retiring May 2013, so need to choose chair
 - Tom Burr (Cornell) will become chair after fall ESS meeting
 - Committee will change chairs every 3 years

Action Requested: For information