

National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee - Meeting Minutes

National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee
George Washington Carver Center
Beltsville, MD
June 23, 2009

Members present: Lee Sommers, Tom Burr, Peter Bretting, P.S. Benepal, Ed Kaleikau, Jerry Arkin, Eric Young, Candice Gardner, Ann Marie Thro, and Joe Colletti

1. NRSP-6
 - o NRSP Review Committee is recommending \$150,000 budget for FY'10
 - o Directors seem to understand better the role of this NRSP in National Plant Germplasm System
 - o National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee members need to be sure to continue presenting importance of regional plant introduction status to directors
2. ARS & NPGS Updates - Peter
 - o New Undersecretary is asking for briefing papers, including one on the germplasm system
 - o Peter presented an overview of National Plant Germplasm System to NCCPB at ASTA conference
 - o [Click here](#) to view the Powerpoint overview of NPGS
 - o ATCC is not focused on maintaining plant related microbes anymore, so National Plant Germplasm System has been asked to take this on
 - o Several analyses conducted since 1987 have concluded that supporting NPGS operations primarily via user fees and/or royalty income would not be feasible or desirable for numerous reasons, including the scenario that NPGS priorities would shift from core conservation goals to varietal and product development; the requisite high fees per germplasm sample distributed and the burden such fees would place on public-sector researchers who are the primary users of NPGS germplasm; the lack of legal authority to receive fees; the cost of accounting/financial management; international commitments, etc.
3. REEO - Catherine Parks
 - o [Click here](#) for the REEO summary handout
 - o Under Secretary Shah is adding personnel to REEO, both from within REE and external
 - o Primary focus now is enhancing coordination within REE and with partners
 - o Also working to enhance communication on image and value of REE
 - o REEO is leading development of a roadmap for all of USDA
 - o Under Secretary Shah is putting together issues teams to chart direction in high priority areas
 - o The areas listed below are currently those high priority areas, but this has not been finalized yet
 - Human nutrition and health
 - International food security
 - Global climate change
 - Bioenergy
 - Ecosystem services
 - o The key question is "What needs to be done to solve the big problems in these areas?"
 - o Health and international/global issues are key to the Under Secretary
 - o The roadmap will identify measures of progress up front and USDA's specific role in solving the major problems
 - o How does workforce development fit into USDA/REE mission, including minorities and key disciplines that are declining?
 - o What are top priorities for research and how will they impact one of the 5 priority areas?
 - o REEO has gone through exercise of determining how much is being spent on the key issue areas, but estimate did not allow counting same dollar for more than one issue, so it's likely significantly underestimated.
 - o Under Secretary is bringing all agency budget folks together to determine how to fund work on issues in these key areas
 - o It would be very helpful to REEO if they were informed of specific ways that germplasm could impact the 5 priority areas
 - o Currently trying to collect program level info on current activity that addresses each of 5 areas from within REE
 - o Need to foster transdisciplinary teams to address priority areas and motivate them to work in this manner
 - o Three factors for team success
 - Resources adequate for whole team
 - Evolve from bottom up with common goal
 - Reward structure that recognizes teams
 - o With germplasm no one knows what next big breakthrough will come from its use
 - o USDA needs a focused marketing effort with a very simple message
 - o Also need to improve image of ag careers with young people
 - o Ad doesn't have a common voice on most issues
4. ARS Update
 - a. [Click here](#) for ARS Update handout
5. PGOOC Update - Peter
 - o Meeting will be in July in Sturgeon Bay
 - o Some new reps from Mexico and South America have joined
 - o For the NPGS, the transition from the current GRIN to GRIN-Global will be fairly slow because current GRIN-US is so large and has numerous users
 - o The Global Information for Germplasm Accessions (GIGA) project (implemented by Bioversity International) will be used to collect and consolidate accession-level information from GRIN-Global, EURISCO, SINGER and other databases so as to provide a single entry-point for germplasm information worldwide.
6. AFRI - Deborah Sheely
 - o [Click here](#) for handout on AFRI overview
 - o Authority for grant awards that support projects for as long as 10 years will be used in future, but in very selective areas
 - o Integrated is now at least 30%
 - o Each program area will be labeled as integrated or non-integrated in the RFA
 - o This year 2 programs are extension only and 5 programs are education only

- o 60/40 fundamental/applied split only applies to research only programs and it's calculated across all programs of that type
- o All integrated projects are required to include a logic model as part of the proposal
- o All RFA's for all competitive programs will be developed in a coordinated manner across all program areas and all sections in CSREES

7. CSREES Update

- o Effective communication with agency from scientists and specialists
 - Helps with long term planning
 - Comment on RFAs during comment period
 - Service on review panels
 - Effective CRIS reports are very important
- o Use KA classifications carefully and use multiple codes when appropriate
- o Use genetic resources code for all plant breeding
- o Acknowledge agency funding on all types of publications, including formula funds like Hatch
- o Session at the 2009 -CSSA Annual Meeting will be on genetic diversity within a managed landscape or production unit
- o Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee is meeting in Wisconsin this year and will focus on the horticulture and science of breeding
- o RFA this year for plant genetics program will include instructions on including provisions for submitting new lines to the National Plant Germplasm System and providing for a budget to do that
- o Research publications on specific varieties should cite the relevant release publication for those varieties

8. General

- o Regional PI projects are all doing well but dealing with rapidly-shrinking operational budgets. Feedback from stakeholders is generally positive
- o PI stations are getting a lot of requests for seed from private individuals, ~20%. If they are not involved in research, they are not eligible for seed, but this can be a PR issue. Generally send a response explaining the policy
- o Need to develop a policy system-wide on this. PGOOC will be working on this policy. National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee will review and comment on drafts as they are developed.
- o [Click here](#) for handout on details of key challenges for National Plant Germplasm System
- o Anyone who has them should send Catherine Parks examples of how National Plant Germplasm System has contributed to any of the 5 REE priority areas
 - Eric will send out a draft format for the write-up for comments from Committee. Once format is decided, examples should be written up following it and returned to Eric
- o Next spring meeting
 - Meet in Beltsville in mid June
 - Eric will send email to select date now
 - Invite NIFA Director