

**National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee Notes**  
**Sturgeon Bay, WI**  
**May 30, 2018**

**Participants:**

NPGCC - Peter Bretting, Tim Cupka, Larry Chandler, Ed Kaleikau, Eric Young, Greg Cuomo, Bob Stougaard, Gan-Yuan Zhong, Randi Johnson, Bill Tracey, David Baltensperger (by phone)

NRSP 6 Technical Advisory Committee - Max Martin, Cathleen McCluskey, Craig Yench, Joyce Loper, Curzio Caruati, Jeff Endelman, Jesse Schartner, and John Bamberg, Ronald French, JL Willett, Josh Parrens, Phil Simon, Sager Sathmorali, Joseph Combs, Bill Barker

1. NPGS Update – Peter Bretting (PowerPoint)
  - Number of accessions and distributions in 2017 are both up from 2016
  - Budget essentially flat since 2014, with a minor increase in 2018
  - PGR management capacity has been decreasing essentially since the mid-2000s
  - Maintenance of germplasm still highest priority, regeneration and data management are second highest
  - Many NPGS personnel have retired, but hiring freeze was just lifted. ARS will be hiring 700 personnel throughout the agency over next year, a few of which will be new NPGS staff.
  - Gayle Volk (ARS, Ft Collins) and Pat Byrne (CO State) organized a workshop in April 2018 at Colorado State to discuss need for curator training due to so many retirements (see further details below under PBCC report).
  
2. PGO Update – Gan-Yuan Zhong (PowerPoint)
  - Due to the restricted budget, no PGO meeting was held in 2017, only a conference call
  - Next GOC meeting June 19-21 2018 at Beltsville, MD and Washington, DC
  - Northeast Regional Plant Introduction Station NE-9, Geneva, NY – vegetables and apple, cold-hardy grape, and tart cherry clonal crops
  - Southern Regional Plant Introduction Station S-9, Griffin, GA – sorghum, peanut, pepper, other vegetables, and sweet potato
  - North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station, NC-7, Ames, IA – maize, grasses, cucurbits and other vegetables, brassica, sunflower, etc.
  - Western Regional Plant Introduction Station W-6. Pullman, WA– alfalfa, garlic, beets, beans, chickpeas, lentils, cool season grasses.
  - Unintended presence of transgenes in gene bank accessions is an ongoing issue
    - Testing for transgenes occurs routinely for maize, alfalfa and cotton, but everyone involved in managing germplasm for these and other crops must help prevent this
    - ARS now has specific best management practices to follow that are aimed at preventing this
  
3. NIFA Update – Randi Johnson and Ed Kaleikau (PowerPoint)
  - Sonny Ramaswamy’s appointment has ended and an interim NIFA Director is in place, new permanent director should be in place early next year
  - Competitive grants related to breeding this year are ~ \$50 Million
  - Capacity Funds used for breeding related projects is ~ \$20 Million

- All CAP grants now under the Sustainable Agriculture Systems RFA
  - New programs Food & Agriculture Cyber Informatics and Tools (FACT) and Microbiome
4. NRSP 6 Future Funding – Bill Barker and John Bamberg
    - Some directors feel that the NIFA/SAES support for the U. S. Potato Genebank (USPG) through NRSP-6 should cease; so future funding from that source is at risk
    - Project needs to develop plan to increase USPG support from ARS and outside support from industry and other sources
    - One constraint is that there are only two or three private potato breeding programs in the US, who already contribute to the project. However, the potato processing industries are not currently providing support
  5. Liaisons' Reports
    - ASTA – Tim Cupka
      - Private seed industry currently in a depression, mergers are occurring to save money, not to expand operations
    - NAPB & PBCC – Bill Tracey (PowerPoint and handout)
      - NAPB meeting in Guelph in August
      - NAPB is ramping up advocacy effort
      - NPGS Workshop on Curator Training (PowerPoint)
        - Also an international need for curator training
        - Subsequent to the April 2018 workshop in Ft. Collins, a NIFA Higher Education Challenge Grant was submitted to continue developing the curriculum for the training
        - Multiple delivery mechanisms will be used for this training, including on line, continuing education/in-service, and in person at universities
  6. NGRAC Report – Peter Bretting (PowerPoint)
    - Currently four vacancies on the Council, which should be filled within the year
  7. Policies and Procedures for GE Traits in Plants – Peter Bretting (handout)
    - BMPs are being implemented now in ARS
    - Asking Potato Genebank and breeders if a BMP is needed specifically for potato
  8. International Treaty - Peter Bretting (PowerPoint)
    - US State Department diplomat is now serving as Chair of the International Treaty Governing Body
    - New international issue is that some countries want to regulate access to digital sequence information/genetic sequence data generated from plant genetic resources similar to access to the germplasm itself