

## **Item 7.0 National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee**

**Presenter: Eric Young for Lee Sommers**

### **Background Information:**

The National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee met on May 29, 2007 in Beltsville, MD at the ARS Carver Center just prior to the Plant Germplasm Operations Committee (PGOC). Several NPGCC members also attended the first day of the PGOC meeting.

The following agenda items were discussed during the NPGCC meeting.

1. **NRSP-5 and -6 Funding.** Regional feedback on NRSP-5 and -6 was reviewed and the funding issues discussed. Feedback indicated support for maintaining funding at least at the FY06 levels. One question that was frequently asked is: Should fees be assessed to recover costs for distribution of plant germplasm? Peter Bretting indicated that the ARS rationale for free distribution has been addressed in the past and white papers have been developed to explain the current system. The NPGCC will review a white paper written several years ago on this topic.
  - a. Motion was passed endorsing off the top funding mechanism for NRSP-5 and -6 at least at the FY06 level.
  - b. Memo with motion was sent to NRSP Review Committee with cc to Colien Hefernan, Ralph Otto, Exec Directors, and ESCOP chair Ron Pardini
  - c. To continue communication, NPGCC will provide ESCOP with agenda briefs describing it's activities and every 2-3 years request time on the ESS annual meeting agenda for a more complete report.
  
2. **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and the Standard Material Transfer Agreement.** ESCOP solicited comments from SAES Directors on the Treaty and SMTA and the memo from Ron Pardini summarizing feedback was discussed. June Blaylock, ARS Tech Transfer, shared her perspectives of prior activities on this issue. The Executive Branch supports the Treaty, which now requires ratification by the Senate (not scheduled for action at this time). American Seed Trade Association also has endorsed the treaty. Points from the discussion include:
  - a. Complex document and SAES system needs educational material to implement the Treaty.
  - b. Treaty includes a list of 64 crops affected; some major US crops are not included such as soybean and cotton.
  - c. NPGS must comply if plant material comes to US from 1) country signing Treaty or 2) CG International Research Centers.
  - d. SMTA follows material and is a contract between original seed provider and recipient. That is, seed from a CG center distributed by a US plant introduction station to a university results in a SMTA between the CG center and the university.
  - e. An issue requiring further clarification is payment of royalties to the international trust if germplasm is a component of commercialized product or if restrictions of use imposed.
  - f. Current holdings in the NPGS are NOT affected if distributed within the US – no SMTA required.
  - g. ARS members of NPGCC will draft a flow chart with details of the Treaty/SMTA process, which will be shared with SAES Directors.

3. **Representation on NPGCC from Other Interested Groups.** The pros and cons of having liaisons from related organizations were discussed. Some possible criteria for liaison members included commitment to NPGS, users of NPGS, advocate for NPGS, provide a mutual benefit, and/or lack of a formal entry point into the NPGS. The following groups were identified as having missions related to NPGCC: ASTA, AOSCA, Am Assoc Industrial Crops (AAIC), and Organic Seed Alliance.

However, the committee decided that it was premature to invite formal liaison members. Instead the NPGCC will volunteer to give presentations on the roles, functions, and components of the NPGS at major meetings of selected national organizations. Initial targets are ASTA, AOSCA and AAIC. A standardized PowerPoint presentation will be developed for the NPGCC member to use.

4. **Marketing the NPGS.** Possible marketing activities and several approaches to marketing were discussed and the following suggested:
  - a. Target - SAES: regular agenda briefs and request in-depth session every 2-3 years at ESS annual meeting.
  - b. Target – related organizations: presentations at their meeting by a NPGCC member.
  - c. Target – LGU system: develop web site with NPGCC information; post PowerPoint presentations, white papers, links, etc.
5. **Next Meeting.** It was decided to meet face to face each year at the PGO meeting to facilitate our interaction with the leaders of NPGS. Quarterly conference calls will also be scheduled to update the NPGCC on NPGS activities and issues. The first call will be scheduled for early October to report on ESS meeting discussions and results of NRSP funding decision.

**Action Requested:** For information only