

National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee (NPGCC)

Zoom Meeting

June 18, 2020

NOTES

Attendees:

Jan Nyrop, Chair, NERA
Peter Bretting, USDA ARS-ONP
Joe Colletti, NCRA
Bob Stougaard, SAAESD
Scot Hulbert, WAAESD
Larry Chandler, USDA ARS
Gan-Yuan Zhong, USDA ARS

Ann Stapleton, USDA NIFA
David Baltensperger, NAPB
Chet Boruff, AOSCA
Ksenija Gasic, PBCC
Tim Cupka, ASTA
Terry Tiersch, NGRAC
Jeff Jacobsen, Executive Vice-Chair and
recorder, NCRA ED

Ed Kaleikau, USDA NIFA

<http://escop.info/committee/national-plant-germplasm-coordinating-committee-npgcc/> for the general website for the National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee (NPGCC) and <http://escop.info/event/npgcc-6182020-meeting/> for the agenda and Information/Presentation materials

1) Opening Remarks and Introductions

(NOTES: Abbreviated meeting, so see updates and additional information in Informational Materials)

2) ARS, NIFA, SAES and NPGS Discussion

- **Operations in the COVID-19 pandemic (all)**
 - SAES at LGUs –Most fieldwork being conducted at LGUs and labs being reactivated on campuses; Travel a challenge in many locations with social distancing; Taking own vehicles to the field; On many campuses the ‘Ag’ research enterprise led the campus efforts to implement best practices
 - USDA ARS – Most international germplasm shipments have ceased (reference US Postal Service website for information about transport/shipment disruptions); The status of NPGS genebank operations depend on complicated interrelationships of Federal, agency, state local and universities guidelines and directives; Some genebanks are shipping germplasm domestically; Some ARS sites are moving from Phase I to II opening status with timing varying based upon local conditions
- **Strategic Plan for Sustainability of NPGS [Peter Bretting]**
 - 2018 Farm Bill directive (reference slide deck)
 - Congress directed USDA to prepare a Plan (assessment and utilization), not a Report

- Collecting data for metrics of genebank operations across all 20 NPGS locations (~75+ measures of genebank operations and status; Goals and forecasts for 5+ and 10+ years (details in slide deck)
- Current status – analyzing and correcting data, drafting narratives, developing graphics with an estimate of 150 page Plan to be circulated to NPGCC and NGRAC for review by early autumn with potential completion by end of the calendar year (rough estimate)
- Major points from the crop vulnerability analyses will be included in the Plan
- **NIFA relocation and AFRI [Ed Kaleikau]**
 - Oct/Nov move of NIFA and ERS to KC Missouri
 - Hiring in full swing with NPLs and staff; Award and Grant Management Offices fully operational and are ‘caught up’ with focus now on FY2020; Scott Angle, NIFA director, will depart in July to assume a position at the University of Florida; Parag Chitnis is acting director for the short-term
 - AFRI – 2-year RFA cycle, 10-20% success rate; FY21-22 earlier deadline (~2 months); Data Management Plans required; Considering larger size awards which may influence success rates; Examples of Plant Breeding awards – Later stages of cultivar development; Crop breeding innovation hubs; High intensity phenotyping sites; Commodity Board co-funding opportunities
- **NRSP Guideline Changes (SAES) [Jeff Jacobsen]**
 - 8th revision (substantial) out for review in regions; General changes of simplification, updates, evaluation question/forms, consistency, enhanced budget narrative, integration of Data Management Plans; Requirement of business plan from inception that includes transition plan away from current funding
 - Consideration for two tracks: Capacity or core (on-going minimal funding long-term) and New and emerging innovations (one or two project cycles with short-term funding)

3) National Genetics Resources Advisory Council [Terry Tiersch]

- Delays in nominations and appointments to the NGRAC, hence lost some ground with work; Now fully constituted and active with 13 members and ex-officio member
- Consulting group to USDA and a subcommittee of the NAREEE Board
- Proceeding with six topical areas: 1) Crop vulnerability, 2) Crop wild relatives, 3) Microbes, 4) Algae, 5) Tribal Issues, and 6) aquatic, will be completed in the coming months
- Contentious future issues – GE, CRISPR/gene editing, National Plan

4) Liaison Topics (AOSCA, ASTA, NAPB, PBCC)

- **AOSCA [Chet Boruff]** – Germplasm is core to our operations; Seed certification, 100 year anniversary of AOSCA (2019); 45 states, Canada, some South America, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa; Maintain varietal purity; Annual meeting next week with hemp a topic; Look at 2014 seed standards; New industry with new people
- **ASTA [Tim Cupka]** – Corn breeder and 10 years liaison of ASTA to the NPGCC; Ag major depressions currently given low prices/ethanol/livestock feed/exports leading to restructuring and changes in the supply chain; Significant switch from GE crop varieties to “conventional” crop varieties trending
- **NAPB [David Baltensperger]** – Growing and vibrant sector, Virtual meeting with open registration; Most members reporting significant budget reductions; Tuition can be used to partially offset state budget shortfalls, but not offset to research and Extension budgets
- **PBCC [Ksenija Gasic]** – New five-year project submitted with five objectives; Survey of public plant breeding capacity published (*in press*) in Crop Science; To be renewed every few years; ebook on Crop Wild Relatives; Infographics developed to demonstrate value and necessity of Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) with funding by PBCC/NAPB; Overview of USDA NIFA Higher Ed Challenge Grant to CSU/ISU/USDA ARS (Fort Collins) with resources to enhance ed outcomes for PGR Conservation and Use

5) Issues and Action Items (from the above)

- **Action 1** – Plan for a future review of the USDA ARS Plan by NPBCC and NGRAC
- **Action 2** – Thank you to Peter Bretting who did participate in “virtual” AES regional association meeting (NERA NE9 project) to discuss the NPGS. Open offer to other regional associations for him to engage and discuss at future meetings of AES Directors (e.g. NCRA, WAAED, SAAED)
- **Action 3** – Gan-Yuan Zhong will rotate off of the NPGCC after many years of active participation. Members of NPGCC formally thank him for his NPGCC contributions over this period. Jan specifically mentioned his work and education based upon his Geneva location. Melanie Harrison, RL and Sorghum and S9 Millet Curator, from the Plant Genetic Resources Conservation Unit at Griffin, GA will be the new NPGS RL member.
- **Action 4** – Discuss and create action plan for the development and implementation of impacts from the National Plant Germplasm System. Collect an inventory of current funding? mechanisms across all available entities. Horizon topic for next year.
- **Action 5** – General discussion on hemp issues and this new community of interest. Horizon topic for next year.

6) Other

- NRSP RC note to NRSP6 presented, not discussed; Peter asked about creating a response to the letter; No response, so no action
- Open discussion on impacts of the NPGS and allied programs within USDA ARS, LGUs and industries. In the past Anne Marie Thro would ensure that the impacts and accomplishments of the NPGS would be distributed to appropriate offices. With her retirement, who is doing this (if anyone)? Hopefully, the position will be refilled. In the future, NPGCC and others should discuss and consider working collaboratively with others and creating targeted impact statements reflecting the importance of the germplasm system. This may also dovetail with the Congressional-directed Plan activity by USDA ARS.

Meeting adjourned at 12:28 with no afternoon session needed

Informational Materials – Written Reports and PowerPoints (review before meeting)

- 1) NPGS Update (ppt) [Peter]
- 2) PGOC, Regional Plant Introduction Stations and NRPS-6 Updates [Gan-Yuan]
- 3) NPGS Plan (ppt) [Peter]
- 4) NIFA Notes (ppt) [Ed]
- 5) NRSP RC to NRSP6 [Jeff]
- 6) PBCC Report for NPGCC [Ksenija]
- 7) Reminder to view the NPGS video <https://youtu.be/uHOclGNEUuw>