




**Experiment Station
Committee on Organization
and Policy (ESCOP)**

TO: NRSP_temp6 Administrative Advisors – William Barker (Lead AA), Walter De Jong, J. F. Meullenet, and Joyce Loper; NRSP_temp6 project editor and technical lead, John Bamberg

FROM: Doug Buhler, Chair NRSP RC 

DATE: June 18, 2020

RE: Response to NRSP6's Request for Renewal

CC: NRSP RC, Regional EDs

The NRSP RC (National Research Support Project Review Committee) met via Zoom on Wednesday, May 27, 2020, to evaluate NRSP_temp6, the renewal proposal for NRSP6. The committee reviewed the project proposal and 5-year budget submitted to NIMSS, peer reviews supplied with the proposal, responses to the peer reviews, and the reviews of the regional associations.

The NRSP RC discussed the proposal at length and was in agreement that the US Potato Gene Bank, which NRSP6 supports, is of great value. However, despite repeated requests by the NRSP RC for NRSP6 to transition to a new funding model over many renewal cycles, the current NRSP_temp6 proposal concluded that no viable alternative funding models exist.

No other ARS programs with a single commodity are supported by the NRSP mechanism as off-the-top Experiment Station funds and all other gene repositories are supported by industry, such as the National Clonal Germplasm Repository for Citrus, as an example. Moreover, language in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (the 2018 Farm Bill) included a charge to USDA-ARS to develop a strategic plan for sustainability of the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS). As such, the NRSP RC concluded that the responsibility of funding NRSP6's efforts ultimately lies with ARS, not the Experiment Station Section (ESS).

Therefore, the NRSP RC unanimously recommends denial of the renewal proposal and budget for NRSP6, as submitted. If this recommendation is approved by the full Experiment Station Section during the Fall ESS business meeting NRSP vote, NRSP6 will receive one final year of off-the-top NRSP funds at the current FY2020 level of \$135,000, per our current NRSP Guidelines. Accordingly, NRSP6 will expire on September 30, 2021.

While the NRSP RC does not support continuation of the current project, we do see the value of continuing a relationship between ESS and the US Potato Gene Bank. We hope that discussion will continue at the appropriate levels of USDA-ARS, ESS, and the University of Wisconsin as the host institution.