

National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee (NPGCC)

Zoom Meeting

June 2, 2021

NOTES

Members:

Jan Nyrop, Chair, NERA	Ann Stapleton, USDA NIFA
Peter Bretting, USDA ARS-ONP	David Baltensperger, NAPB
Joe Colletti, NCRA	Chet Boruff, AOSCA
Bob Stougaard, SAAESD	Ksenija Gasic, PBCC
Scot Hulbert, WAAESD (absent)	Tim Cupka, ASTA
Larry Chandler, USDA ARS	Ed Kaleikau, USDA NIFA
Jeff Jacobsen, Executive Vice-Chair (recorder)	Melanie Harrison, USDA ARS

<http://escop.info/committee/national-plant-germplasm-coordinating-committee-npgcc/> for the general website for the National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee (NPGCC) and for the agenda, background for and membership of the NPGCC, reports, other documents discussed during NPGCC meetings.

2021 Agenda Topics

- 1) Introductions and Additions/Approval of Agenda (Jan, Peter)
- 2) Approval of 2020 NPGCC Meeting Notes (All)
 - Approved as posted (David, Joe motions)
- 3) Effects of the pandemic on operations, progress and plans for recovery (All)
 - Amazed at ability to function, outcomes not deviated much from past years, resuming to new normal, no masks if vaccinated and no surveillance testing (Jan)
 - Biweekly NCRA meetings, share BPs, testing regimes varied leading to actions and adjustments as necessary, field operations did pivot given travel restrictions with transportation to field sites, face-to-face (F2F) meetings could end up being virtual depending upon Covid (Joe)
 - Did not impact UGA significantly, College of Ag demonstrated leadership and was a critical player in leading change, budget reduction of 10% by not filling vacant positions, with some recently restored (Bob)
 - Nationally – regional and national coordination efforts with LGUs pivoted to share BPs, share rapidly developing guidelines/policies and keep communication efforts regular (Jeff)
 - Food and Ag system resilient, great planning and execution, impressed how the system fared, individual and committee work was impacted, lingering impact on mental health and world view that is here to stay, concerns with students/graduate students, impact on behaviors and morale too (Jan)
 - Computer technology was impactful, change how we did things, limited travel, resilient response and pushed through some hiccups, will change our operations, this virtual NPGCC meeting is more effective than in person in terms of time and money (David)
 - No travel, time zones did not seem to matter with global work including research conference calls, example with Chinese breeders on calls across time zones, change of pace, winter work elsewhere, did not do some things, challenge with international seed

movement and capacity of customs processing for international movement of seeds. Customs challenges due to staffing, hiring people a struggle, good harvest last fall, sales based on one-on-one virtual meetings with customers which is a challenge, hotel availability an issue (Tim)

- Associations and other businesses inconvenienced but not impacted dramatically, work more difficult, across the same, seed labs ok, not yet F2F so remote, missing relationships, travel dollar savings, best financial year too, reevaluate travel maybe some shifting in approaches in future (Chet)
- NIFA continues with KC transition, hiring ongoing and has worked out fairly well with new hires, good for grant panels, no-cost extensions on grants increased requests, more conference grant requests, still in telework mode, resilient, tech tools developed and engaged with DIE (diversity, inclusion, equity) efforts and integration of new employees into NIFA (Ed and Ann)

4) Current status of NPGS (Peter and others)

- Refer to NPGS slide deck for specific information
- Genebank units in most major growing regions
- Partnership with federal and state institutions across 75+ years
- Calendar basis slightly less than 600,000 accessions in the NPGS now, targeted growth in collections
- Adjustments made at locations to comply with ARS, LGU, municipality and other rules on occupancy, rotational use of space, will change with vaccinations
- Budget history and purchasing power show challenges, especially when budget numbers are adjusted for the effects of purchasing power
- Challenges include funding, personnel (slower hiring timelines), Best Management Practices (BMPs) for GE traits and new conservation issues/methods, acquiring wild relatives.
- PGR training initiative, Infographics reference
- Budget increases for managing plant genetic resources of small grains, blueberries and cranberries, and hemp
 - Discussion – one parent as GMO, then labelled as GMO; overseas an issue with forward breeding activities as the ‘promoter’ present, not the ‘gene’ issue; Profile packaging information may help, xPVP and patented material, therefore not GMO or not transgene or not as better information
 - USDA ARS will reflect on this issue, information in patent disclosures extremely vague currently compared to past practice in order to not disclose ‘trade secrets’, are there liability issues? Adding disclaimer language (in general) may help. (Tim and Peter)

5) Plant Introduction Station Impacts (Melanie)

- Refer to Plant Introduction Station (PIS) Impacts slide deck for information on S9, NRSP6, NE9, NC7
- Noting that NRSP6 will have used its extra year of terminal funding by September 2021
- Incorporating hemp genetic resources into NE-9 on hold until the software security and alarm system issues are fixed and verified. Until then, DEA will not issue registration to the facility.

6) NPGS Potato Genebank (post NRSP6 termination) and LGUs (Ag Experiment Station) NRSP Guideline Overview (Peter, Jan, Jeff)

- General recap of situation, no action by NPGCC

7) NPGS Plan (Peter)

- Significant effort in response to Congressional directive in 2018 Farm Bill
- Data contributed by USDA ARS genebank staff and several LGU faculty members
- Dashboards and Infographics used throughout to summarize the extensive data collected
- 300 page document that will likely be released by the USDA Secretary and possibly the Federal Register for comment with 30-90 days to provide input
- Customers and stakeholders provide input before the wider public
- Funding support may come from increased annual budgets and coupled with specific impacts on each Plant Introduction Station
- Refer to 2018 Farm Bill language for next steps on Plan

8) Hemp research and genetic resources (All, across LGUs, ARS and industry)

- Seed certification interest growing for hemp
- Long-term storage of PVP hemp cultivars and back-up of Geneva hemp germplasm in Fort Collins, CO, DEA registration received for the Ft. Collins facility, and is in the process for the Geneva facility, then distribution possible from Geneva.
- Controlling pollination of hemp is hard, so new equipment needed to be purchased for Geneva. A hemp curator was hired, and they are developing methods for morphological descriptions of hemp.
- ARS is conducting research on hemp at several locations. Corvallis, OR – modeling hemp production systems, PNW crop interactions; Peoria, IL – biochemistry, THC testing procedures; Lexington, KY – generating data that could inform FDA considerations for enabling hemp byproducts to be fed to livestock. By-products cannot be fed to livestock at this time due to lack of protocols and nutritional information. Additional studies on hemp diseases and insect management.
- TAMU – Hired two hemp breeders, Ext Spec handles hemp questions. Conducting research on gene editing, CBD levels, bioengineering of secondary products; GA – Minimal effort on hemp at this time, KY tip of spear for hemp production in the US; SC – Clemson with production practices, disease management, private companies starting.
- Industry – 2014 Farm Bill provided initial industrial hemp regulations, seed certification standards being fine-tuned and adopted, need seed and additional hemp varieties, review board set up for review of publications, etc. Seed industry working to advance the seed certification process, have variety listings now from Canada and Europe; much communication on general seed certification processes, some drop off of interest in this crop unless more alternative uses arise for hemp.

9) Other

- Should NPGCC meetings remain virtual, spread out over multiple blocks of time?
- Put out national press information on the germplasm system