PBCC meeting Raleigh, NC - Minutes

August 16, 2016

5:10-6:45pm

Chair: Michael Gore

Vice Chair: Thomas Lübberstedt

Secretary: Kate Evans

Incoming Secretary: Ksenija Gasic

Participants: Ksenija Gasic, Kate Evans, Gerald Myers, Eric Young, Ramasamy Perumal, Thomas Lübberstedt, Gary Pederson, Michael Kantar, Vasu Kuraparthy, Jodi Scheffler, Bo Zhang, Barry Tillman, Vince Pantalone, Assibi Mahama, Natalia de Leon, Barbara Liedl, Neil Anderson, Brian Leckie, Rich Pratt, Jim Mcferson, Tesfaye Tesso, Jane Dever, Alison Thompson, Hem Bhandari, Tom Koch, Klaus Koehler, David Francis, Michael Gore, Ali Missaoui, Patricio Munoz, Amy Iezzoni, David Baltensperger, Wayne Smith, Ted Wallace, Karen Moldenhauer, Ed Kaleikau, Ann Marie Thro, Manjit Misra and Pat Byrne.

M Gore opened the meeting and presented the agenda. Self introduction.

Dr. Misra gave report on NGRAC, **N**ational **G**enetic **R**esources **A**dvisory **C**ouncil. 9 members, 6 scientific and 3 from private or public sector. Focused on 8 major crops. Scope: acquisition, preservation, access, evaluation, characterization, distribution and exchange of genetic resources of life forms important to American agriculture: plants, forest, aquatic, animals…

NGRAC makes recommendation to USDA to ensure that these essential resources are adequately preserved. Goals:

1. Develop the plan together with the seed industry for ongoing evaluation of the pool of commercially available non GE and organic seed varieties
2. Identify market needs for producers serving GE sensitive markets
3. USDA should work with seed suppliers to ensure there is enough organic seeds
4. Ensure that diverse and high quality commercial seed supply exists that meets the needs of all farmers.

PBCC might serve as an additional forum for interaction on NGRAC recommendations.

NGRAC supports development of low cost assays, promotes diversity in agriculture by devoting additional resources for genotyping, phenotyping, evaluation, breeding and/or pre-beeding. Identifies gaps in genetic diversity and passport info, communicates to seed association and ASTA.

Questions from the PBCC: Does NGRAC get input from individual CGCs? Yes. Original mandate of NGRAC is broad. If additional questions pass them to Ann Marie Thro and Manjit Misra. NGRAC is very active, report is available online. Proposed to organize joint agenda NGRAC and PBCC during next PBCC meeting. Manjit will explore the possibility.

M Gore presented and overview of PBCC 5-year plan and 5 subcommittes, one for each objective.

K Evans presented summary of objective 1, breeding capacity

P Byrne on objective 2, genetic diversity

Ann Marie Thro on objective 3 – recap of the IPR meeting held prior to PBCC/NAPB, more than 50 attendees from diverse backgrounds, very good conversations.

T Lübberstedt summarized objective 4 – suggested for internship opportunities to be more visible on NAPB web site; propose core competencies for plant breeding students, knowledge, experiences that students should have when they leave university. Figure out if there are funding opportunities from FFAR (foundation for food and agriculture research) discuss it during series of meetings that are planned.

M Gore summarized objective 5 – opportunity to provide feedback to policy makers, for funding, opinion on emerging technologies, put together one pager, share it with all state reps for additional comments, finalize it and share with USDA.

Wayne Smith – How will you handle information throughout the year? MG, don’t have a process for making sure that the group as a whole is heard and not just single person, and how to communicate with the directors of experimental stations. News alerts vs thoughtful information.

Make sure all states have representatives in PBCC. KE, reiterate the state reps at the major NAPB meeting.

Breakout to 5 sessions till 6:35pm.

Decision was made to stop at 6:45pm, go to dinner and conclude tomorrow.

Objective 1 notes.

Kate Evans, David Francis, Barry Tillman. Bo Zhang, Tesfaye Tesso, Vince Pantalone, Eric Young

1. Statement should be drafted to send to XX (Ann Marie to advise) ‘PBCC have reviewed the report written by the IDA STPI on “Examination of Plant Breeding at U.S. Academic Institutions and Private Companies in 2015” and conclude that it is highly flawed with results that are inconsistent with the methodology’.
2. Probably a waste of time and resources to respond to the document in detail.
3. Focus on the list of breeders used for the IP survey. Determine if the list can be circulated to PBCC state reps to fill in gaps.
4. Draft a list of questions to be contained in a new survey to address more than human capacity.
5. Contact Michael Coe for advice.
6. Explore potential to use NAPB funds granted to PBCC (according to DF, it shouldn’t be considered as purely travel funds). We could employ someone to do the survey for us.

Objective 2 notes:

Pat Byrne, Gerald Myers, Patricio Munoz, Rich Pratt, Barbara Liedl, Neil Anderson, Brian Leckie, Alison Thompson, Ed Kaleikau, Klaus Koehler, Jodi Scheffler, Wayne Smith and Ksenija Gasic

1. PBCC should sponsor or suggest symposium on genetic diversity at the crop and horticultural professional annual meetings to engage broader audience. CSSA on plant genetic resources and ISHS on ornamental germplasm organized recently; Jodi, Patricio, and Ksenija will follow up on this.
2. Demand for germplasm is up but resources are flat, very little for characterization of germplasm and pre-breeding activities. Write white paper on what type of information germplasm repositories collect and how is the germplasm used, GRIN global etc. Less than 10% of those that request germplasm report back to repositories on how is the germplasm used. Gayle Volk agreed to lead the effort on white paper.
3. Crop vulnerability reports are good sources of information some already published (e.g. apple)
4. Information can be disseminated as opinion papers, letters to editors or in crop specific journals.
5. Funding for high throughput phenotyping will be available. Meetings to discuss how the funding program will look will happen at the end of August. PBCC will have representative in Jim McFerson.

Objective 3 notes:

N/A – see IPR meeting notes from Bill Tracy

Objective 4 notes:

1. Internship white paper containing best practice protocol uploaded on NAPB web-site (<https://www.plantbreeding.org/job-postings-index>). Klaus Koehler considers with NAPB to develop a distinct internship web-site within NAPB.
2. ISU did hire a lecturer (Anthony “Assibi” Mahama) tasked (among others) to work on core concepts in plant breeding. A white paper on how to proceed developing these has been developed with Dr. Mike Retallick, Ag Education at ISU. ISU will serve as “guinea pig” to determine, whether the process of establishing core concepts is useful. Dr. Retallick will give a seminar to ISU plant breeding faculty on backward curriculum design August 19, followed by a plant breeding faculty retreat August 31, and subsequent program meetings on implementation/identification of gaps. Outcomes will be shared with other public and private plant breeding programs to receive feedback on core concepts, and to open up this process – if successful at ISU.

The discussions at the meeting yesterday identified the following: a) it would be useful to identify minimum expectations for plant breeding students at BS, MS, PhD level; b) it is important to consider CORE concepts, not just grow the list of competencies/expertises, given limited time; c) an extended list might still be useful and help universities to have plant breeding programs with particular emphasis/strength (eg, quantitative genetics, biotech, etc). Finally, it will be critical to develop mechanisms/criteria to evaluate, whether students master core concepts.

1. Thomas will have phone conversation with Tawny Mata from FFAR August 23 – will share outcomes in next PBCC phone conference (to be determined).

Objective 5 notes:

Michael Gore, David Baltensperger, Ali Missaoui, Michael (Mikey) Kantar, Amy Iezzoni, Ann Marie Thro, and Hem Bhandari

1. Mikey Kantor agreed to serve as co-chair of communication committee with M. Gore.
2. M. Gore will make slides and reports from PBCC meeting available to PBCC membership via GoogleDrive or another type of file sharing system.
3. M. Gore will write a brief summary of the NAPB and PBCC meetings, which will be sent to PBCC reps for which can also be shared with SAES Directors, Deans, and Department Heads.
4. M. Gore will attend the NAPB communication committee to see if linkages can be made between NAPB and PBCC.
5. M. Kantor and M. Gore will share the responsibility of communicating topics and issues that require feedback from PBCC membership.
6. M. Kantor and M. Gore will investigate the possibility of having the PBCC Chair include a reoccurring column in CSA News or Hort Science News.

Meeting concluded at 6:45pm

Minutes taken by K. Gasic