

Alfalfa Crop Germplasm Committee

Ste. Foy, Quebec, Canada

July 19, 2004

Attendance: Gary Bauchan, Charlie Brummer (chair), John Caddel, Stephanie Greene, Gary Hoard, David Johnson, JoAnn Lamb, Mark McCaslin, Dave Miller, Jorge Mosjidis, Lanny Rhodes, Mark Smith, Larry Teuber, Jessica Tofte, George Vandemark, Mike Velde, Don Viands (secretary).

Charlie Brummer opened the meeting, and attending members introduced themselves.

1. **Acceptance of last meeting's minutes:** Gary Bauchan corrected the minutes by changing "Alfalfa Germplasm Collection" to "Alfalfa Germplasm Committee" in the section labeled, "Status of *Medicago* germplasm." The minutes were approved as corrected.
2. **Curator's report:** Stephanie Greene distributed the Alfalfa Crop Germplasm Committee Curator Report. She reported that the peer review process was approved for the next five-year project of the USDA, ARS National Temperate Forage Legume Germplasm Unit. Germplasm has been characterized. Two years ago, this unit received an increase in budget, but it has not been changed since then. The unit is not likely to receive an increase for a few years. In the last two years, seed package distribution has increased substantially, mostly for *Medicago truncatula* requests. Alfalfa standard checks have been inventoried (see table in the report).

Gary suggested that a core collection be created of the *M. truncatula* germplasm. Stephanie replied that she could do that now based on morphological data or wait until she has molecular data. The ACGC replied that a core collection should be developed soon because of the redundancy in the collection. Stephanie also pointed out that gaps exist in the germplasm collection.

3. **Funding for germplasm evaluations:** Stephanie reported that no funds are available within the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS) for germplasm evaluation. The forage legume evaluation money was used for salaries in USDA. Two years ago, Stephanie drafted a letter to inform NPGS about the need. We need to bring this funding need to the attention of the appropriate people. We need to get a congressional appropriation. This committee and the NAAIC and Trifolium conference presidents could send a letter regarding alfalfa, *Trifolium*, and special purpose legumes to Evert Byington, Peter Bretting, and Ed Knippling. The National Alfalfa Alliance has lobbying capabilities. Mark McCaslin will be chair and will send Don Viands the name of a contact person.
4. **Seed of standard check cultivars:** Stephanie's report contains the list of cultivars with low amounts of seed. During the last meeting, Larry Teuber recommended that the originator of the cultivar supply seed; if the originator is not able to do so, then we need to look for other sources. The Western Alfalfa Improvement Conference committed to increase seed if asked. ACGC members should review Gary's list to verify the originators. We cannot assume that the originator will be able to supply the seed, but industry would be willing to increase the seed if the cultivars can be distributed across a few years. ACGC needs to prioritize the cultivars that need to be increased first.

Gary Bauchan raised the question of the appropriate seed lots to use for the increases. Larry stated that we need to set aside the sources for increases at Pullman. We need to verify that the seed lots

have the characteristics that they are supposed to have for the standard tests. Stephanie can identify seed sources for increasing. One pound of seed should be plenty for future increases. Seed can be stored at Fort Collins. Stephanie will update the list of check cultivars by deleting those that no longer are official checks.

In some cases, more than one seed lot was sent to Pullman. Gary replied that Beltsville had more than one seed bag that they maintained. No one knows which lot is appropriate. Someone needs to conduct a test to verify each check in question.

Someone needs to take ownership of standard check varieties. Larry was charged with dealing with it in his standard check subcommittee and will report back during the next meeting. Charlie also charged this subcommittee to address which seed lot to use for increase.

Dave Miller mentioned that two check cultivars per company could be increased each year. Stephanie needs a list of contact people for sending seed to each spring. Larry Teuber was charged with organizing this effort. If Larry could identify the most critical check cultivars, he could ask someone to verify the characteristics.

5. **Update assessment of alfalfa germplasm vulnerability:** This topic deals with Homeland Security. ACGC needs to update the statement that Gary Gauchan had written. Larry suggested that this is a good opportunity for making a case for improving our situation, similar to the opportunity during the 1970s with the *Helminthosporium* corn leaf blight epidemic. Mark McCaslin replied that there is so much genetic variability in private breeding programs and the germplasm system, that it would be difficult to make a case. Gary will update his report as a first draft, and then send it to Stephanie, Mark, Don, and Charlie for review. The report is due in September.

Subcommittee reports: The subcommittees did not meet since the last ACGC meeting. Mark McCaslin stated that we need to brainstorm about germplasm enhancement because it is the weak link. Gary Bauchan suggested that we could meet at this year's ASA meetings for one hour and discuss enhancement, but most ACGC members replied that they do not plan to attend the meeting. Mark will discuss this topic during the NAAIC Industry Committee meeting.

6. **Nomination of ACGC Secretary:** George Vandemark was nominated and agreed to serve as secretary during the next two-year period. Don Viands will move into the chair position. ACGC approved.
7. **Adjourned** 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Don Viands

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