

DRAFT NOTE OF UK PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES GROUP MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2008

Present:

Mike Ambrose	JIC
Niall Green	SASA
Charlotte Allender	WHRI
Dave Astley	WHRI
Brian Ford-Lloyd	Birmingham University
Nigel Maxted	Birmingham University
Mike Camlin	Agri-Food Biosciences Institute
Matthew Ordidge	Reading University
Kath Bainbridge	Defra
Martyn Ibbotson	Defra
David Coates	Defra
Martin Lewis	Defra

08/01 Election of Chair and Technical Secretary

1. The offices of Chair and Technical Secretary were up for election. A call for nominations had gone out before hand. Mike Ambrose had been nominated for Chair and Nigel Maxted as the Deputy Chair. No other nominations had been received. Members unanimously agreed that Mike and Nigel should be elected to the posts.
2. Martyn Ibbotson reminded members that the posts were for three years. He thanked Dave Astley, the outgoing Technical Secretary for his supportive work. Martyn said that Defra would take an informal look at the terms of reference of the Tech Sec, although with the heavy work load on a small team he could not promise when this might be. He also reminded the Group that the Terms of Reference of the UKPGR Group needed to be reviewed by 31 December 2010.
3. Once the Offices were elected the meeting of the UKPGR Group could begin.

08/02 Apologies for absence

4. Apologies received from: Bob Sherman; Simon Linnington; Kate Evans; Sandra Slack; Joan Cottrell and Ian Thomas

08/03 Minutes of the meeting held 18 October 2007

5 Agreed.

08/04 Matters arising from previous minutes

6. Actions carried out: please see Agenda items 08/05 and 08/14 below.

08/05 FP7 Q&A (David Coates)

7. David Coates gave a brief power point presentation to update members on the current situation on FP7. Regarding calls for FP9, he said these had closed last month and disappointingly there was nothing in the call to cover genetic resources. His message was not encouraging although he did say that any funding received under the GENRES programme would not preclude further funding of genetic resources under FP7.

8. David subsequently circulated information on potential funding from other sources and will produce a summary of his talk and background documents to be attached to the minutes of this meeting (previously circulated, but see attached).

08/06 Update on EMR cherry resources

9. Kate Evans was unable to attend the meeting so did not provide an update. However Mike Ambrose informed members that Ken Tobbutt had left EMR at the end of March. In view of Ken's departure Mike and other members of the Group expressed concern about the future of cherry resources at the site. Mike had been in discussion with Kate Evans prior to the meeting and undertook to remain in contact with her to work through the list of resources that Ken had produced and maintain a watching brief of the situation and offer support where needed.

10. Because of the lack of information about what was actually happening at EMR there was much concern by members for the future. For example, one issue was whether data held by EMR would be free. Martyn Ibbotson thought probably not, so Mike suggested that Brian Ford-Lloyd (who had raised the issue) should write to EMR about this directly and specify the data he required. Kath Bainbridge informed the Group that there were advanced discussions over a 1 year contract extension with EMR with Kate Evans as the project manager. Kath Bainbridge invited members to write to her about her concerns before the next R&D contract for a one year extension is signed with EMR.

08/07 Update on National Fruit Collections negotiations

11. Martin Lewis updated members on the state of play re the open tender competition for the maintenance and curation of the National Fruit Collections. He explained that Reading University had won the 5 year contract but it (the contract) had not been signed at the time of the meeting. There were still some contractual issues to resolve (subsequently done and the contract signed). Reading University would curate the Collections with FAST carrying out the maintenance of the NFC. The NFC would remain at the Brogdale site.

12. Mike Ambrose welcomed Matthew Ordidge of Reading University to the Group. Matthew would be Reading's representative on the Group. Matthew said that in the next couple of months it was hoped that Reading's programmes of research and curation would be made public.

08/08 Recent developments in PGRFA in Scotland

13. Niall Green gave a short power point presentation setting out recent developments in Scotland. In particular he informed members that the first meeting of the Scottish Working Group on Landraces and Traditional Varieties had met in February. He also reported that SASA would cease to be an Agency from the 1st April 2008 and would be moving back into core Government in Scotland. The name SASA would remain but Scottish Agricultural Science Agency would be replaced by Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture.

08/09 Update on International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

14. Prior to the meeting Martyn Ibbotson had circulated the web link to the report of the second session of the IT Governing Body held in Rome from 29 October – 2 November 2007(ref: IT/GB-2/07/Report). Martyn drew members' attention to the contents of paragraphs 61-65 of the Report which concerned the implementation of the Multilateral system and in particular the draft procedures for the third party beneficiary. Martyn emphasised that it would be another eighteen months before action became relevant to the UKPGR Group.

15. Martyn Ibbotson said that as regards the degree of 'buy in' and commitment to ABS from institution housing gene banks, it was now for gene bank managers to take action forward with their senior principals. A quick round robin of members revealed that Mike Ambrose (John Innes Institute) was quite advanced in that the sMTA had been re-drafted to be JIC specific and this had been agreed with his Contracts Dept. The first sMTA had already been issued. Dave Astley (WHRI) said that his Head of Department and business groups had signed up to the use of the sMTA where appropriate although at the time of the meeting none had been issued. Gavin Ramsay (SCRI) said action was being taken forward.

16. Action was with Martyn as the UK Focal Point for the IT to formally email gene bank managers about the state of play of their discussions with their principals on the introduction of the sMTA.

08/10 Update on the UKGRFA portal

17. Martin Lewis explained that a number of upgrades had been carried out based on suggestions from members although he conceded that the limited funding available did not allow nearly as many upgrades as members would wish. Nevertheless, it was a start and similar funds should be available in 2008/09 financial year.

08/11 Seeds Directive 98/95/EC

18. It was agreed that Niall Green and Mike Ambrose would forward to Martin Lewis a short paper setting out their thoughts and comments on the problems associated with the Seeds Directive. Martin would try and get George Saunders, Defra policy advisor on plant varieties and seeds issues, to attend the next meeting.

08/12 UK National Inventory of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: current status and future developments

19. Ian Thomas was unable to attend the meeting so Mike Ambrose would ask Ian to circulate to members a paper setting out the current status and future developments of the Inventory.

08/13 Summer Technical visit

20. Mike Ambrose suggested a two day visit to the National Fruit Collections at Brogdale and the Millennium Seed Bank at nearby Wakehurst Place. Simon Linnington of the MSB (not attending) had agreed to this and Matthew Ordidge for the NFC was happy to participate. [date?]

08/14 Meeting with JNCC and NE on CWR

21. Mike Ambrose had made contact with JNCC. He had identified a contact to write to and would be writing to set up a meeting as soon as possible.

08/15 Harvesting Diversity Conference II

22. Mike Ambrose had nothing new to report. He and members were keen to hold an event although they conceded that realistically it would not be as big as the original HDC held in Birmingham. Mike proposed he set up a meeting with Mike Roper (Animals), David Smith (Microbes) and himself to explore the possibilities of such an event.

08/16 AOB

23. Dave Astley has stepped down from the ECPGR Brassica and Umbellifer Working Groups because of his retirement. He requested that members endorse the nomination of Charlotte Allender for both posts so that she could be formally proposed by Martyn Ibbotson as the UK Focal Point. Members agreed to this. Martyn would shortly put forward Charlotte's nominations (subsequently done).

08/17 Date of next meeting

24 A revised date of the 4th December has been circulated to the Group.