

UK PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES GROUP

Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 13 March 2013 Room 808, Nobel House

Nigel Maxted (NM) Chair – Uni of B'ham	Matt Ordidge (MO) – Uni of Reading
Mike Ambrose (MA) – JIC	Lydia Smith (LS) - NIAB
Charlotte Allender (CA) – Uni of Warwick	Mercy Morris (MM) Plant Heritage
G Cambell (GC) - SASA	Julian Hosking (JH) Nat Eng and FAnGR
Ruth Eastwood (RE) – RBG Kew	Adrian Turner (AT) - JIC
Bob Sherman (BS) - Garden Organic	
Ianto Thomas (IT) – IBERS	Julian Jackson (JJ) - Defra
Sean May (SM) –Uni of Nottingham	Louisa Bagshaw (LB) - Defra
Sonia Dias (SD) – CGIAR, Biodiversity	Bill Lyons (BL) - Defra

13/01 Apologies (NM)

Abi Johnson - EMR	Feli Fernandez - EMR
Gavin Ramsay - SCRI	Ann McMahon - NI, DARD
Penny Maplestone – BSPD	Alessandro Moscuza - DFID
Simon Linington – RGB Kew	Milika Buurman – BSPB/Limagrain

13/02 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2012 (NM)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Actions:

BL/SM to finalise and arrange publishing.

13/03 Matters arising (NM)

There were no significant matters arising to report. NM took the opportunity to welcome new members to the UK PGR and explained that through their attendance it was hoped that greater connections could be made between our two areas of business (environmental and breeding). He also encouraged all members to make agenda item suggestions that fit in with the focus of the meetings (Spring/March meetings are focused towards environmental interests and Autumn/October meetings are focused towards breeding interests).

13/04 UK Landrace Conservation and use Concept Note (NM)

NM said that, based on earlier research projects (two projects funded by Defra one in 2003 which identified unique landraces of cereals and forages, and the second in 2008 that was limited to Veg in Eng and Wales) identifying unique varieties and risks to loss of diversity, there was a need for a national inventory. This concern has been discussed with the former Defra Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) who had indicated support for work towards an inventory and the conservation of landraces. The new CSA still needs to be convinced there is a need for Defra to fund this work. JJ said that he will seek an 'in principle' agreement from the CSA for the proposal, but the proposal will likely need to be reviewed to ensure that it fully considers all possibilities for funding and be aligned to Defra's four new priorities. Several members of the Group expressed concerns about reducing the budget and the time being spent on the proposal. This prompted the suggestion of seeking

involvement of industry in the proposal. NM said this would delay the proposal further but some small breeding companies might be persuaded to engage. LB explained that this would be the sort of engagement that Defra would welcome in the proposal.

Actions:

JJ to try and get CSA 'in principle' agreement to the proposal as soon as possible

LS, CA and MA to contact Veg contacts and see if any engagement can be generated and report back to NM

NM to amend the proposal/application and submit in 6 weeks

13/05 Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol (JJ)

JJ gave a brief summary of the Nagoya Protocol – for the benefit of meeting newcomers. The key issues being tackled at the moment are the EU negotiations upon an EU Regulation on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). Key points included the 'due diligence' approval and the process for 'trusted collections'.

13/06 Updating the UK National Inventory and EURISCO (IT)

IT said the UK needs it's up to date inventory to be uploaded to EURISCO by 21 March, a deadline that fits in with the preparations of the ITPGRFA Governing Body, and that a number of collections were in the process of submitting the inventory data he had requested. In relation to collections and the recording of them in the inventory and EURISCO the Group discussed what should be recorded, what should not be recorded, organisational preferences for recording, and the mixed understandings about what is recorded at national and regional levels.

Actions:

IT to load UK inventory data into EURISCO by deadline (subsequently completed)

13/07 ECPGR Update (JJ)

JJ said, following the ECPGR Steering Group meeting in December the ways that ECPGR works in the next phase is changing (changes include defining a new operational structure, mode of operation, objectives, hosting arrangements and external visibility of ECPGR). NM repeated some of the concerns the Group highlighted about this exercise in the October 2012 meeting. JJ then said the exercise to tender for a hosting institute for ECPGR and EURISCO had been won; the winners respectively are Global Crop Diversity Trust based in Bonn and Leibniz Institute of Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research.

13/08 Preparations for Plant Treaty Governing Body (JJ)

JJ briefly mentioned the exercise to gather information on collections to update the UK inventory and EURISCO, and also a request to provide information on SMTA's. He then spoke of implementation and project funding challenges and options for reducing costs on project management activity and increasing income from the MLS. A Compliance Committee is convening in April but will largely focus on finalising procedural matters.

Actions:

BL to co-ordinate gathering of, and then submit SMTA information (subsequently completed)

13/09 Preparations for CGRFA 15-19 April (BL and JJ)

JJ said the CGRFA holds this meeting every two years. Considering the agenda for this meeting we will coordinate and request input from various sectors. The agenda includes items/papers on The State of the World Biodiversity, Targets and Indicators for each sector including PGR, Climate Change, ABS arrangements, Biodiversity and Nutrition, Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for PGR, Genebank Standards.

Actions:

BL to co-ordinate input into CGRFA preparations from UK PGR community as appropriate (subsequently completed)

13/10 PGR applications/project news (NM)

MO said that Reading Uni had received an offer from Defra to extend their existing contract for maintaining the National Fruit Collection for one year (the contract extension has since been activated).

LS said that BBRSC transformation webpages advertised that PG Crop researchers are funding work of other Groups in GM wheat – but potentially this could be extended to brassicas

BS said:

- GO, in partnership with Warwick Uni, Eden and MSB submitted a bid for £800,000 to the Heritage Lottery Fund for capacity building and teaching how to curate and collect seeds and pass on this knowledge. They expect to receive the results of the application in May
- A high profile project between Garden Organic and Raymond Blanc at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons will be launched in The Telegraph on April 20th. This will focus on heritage vegetables and aim to attract as much public interest as possible and promote support for the Heritage Seed Library. News is embargoed until after 20th April.

MM said Plant Heritage are looking for funding to help on a project about threatened plants/Red List plants

RE said:

- The Kew Adapting to Climate Change project, research stage was ending and they were starting to analyse results to identify target countries
- The Kew CWR valuation study looking at CWR in the market chain was in the modelling phase and she hoped the study would be finished in one month
- The Kew Festival theme is 'food'. CWR will be highlighted in activities

SM said Uni of Nottingham had made an application to BBSRC to cover work for a germplasm module (propose several hubs for better distribution – and not one central point).

CA said:

- Uni of Warwick is about to start negotiating with Defra the funding/contract for the Veg Genebank
- CA is now a Trustee for Under Utilised Crops Charity.

GC said:

- SASA is undergoing some restructuring and so several projects are on hold
- The Scottish Landrace Protection Scheme (SLPS) is getting more interest and more vulnerable lines are being regenerated
- A Regeneration project under the SLPS is underway and is mainly focused on brassica.

JH said that the Farm Animal Genetic Resources (FAnGR) Committee:

- Is finalising work on the FAnGR Country Report 2012

- Is approaching the final stages of a research project on FAnGR Conservation Strategies
- Is trying to feed into negotiations for the next EU Rural Development regulations/plans as these can help protect FAnGR and also traditional orchards
- Has submitted a list of livestock breeds to the Natural History Museum for inclusion in the UK Species Dictionary. Inclusion in the Dictionary is an important link through to national and international biodiversity recording and monitoring systems.
- Via meetings with key Defra policy contacts (including the Team leading on the National Ecosystems Assessment) and involvement with the Natural Capital Initiative; is trying to mainstream FAnGR biodiversity to ensure it is caught in the appropriate policies
- Is planning to meet HMRC about tax exemptions for heritage collections and how they apply to FAnGR.

NM remarked that some of the issues being raised in the FAnGR sector had crossover to those being raised in the PGR sector and that it appeared we could benefit by an ongoing exchange and updating of business in the sectors.

NM said:

- Uni of Birmingham had made a proposal to the EU to fund research into CWR in southern Africa
- The PGR Secure mid-term evaluation in Cyprus had gone well, particularly in the take up in about half of the countries in Europe in developing national strategies for CWR
- The FAO agrobiodiversity conservation toolkit for national PGR programmes will be published next month
- The FAOs CGRFA mid Nov 2012 meeting concerning the establishment of a global network of in situ conservation sites for CWR and LR went well and it was agreed that such a network should be established
- He will be speaking at the Eucarpia meeting in June 2013 about '*Extending use of the crop gene pool: developing national strategies for crop wild relative conservation and use*'
- There is a meeting in Jordan in March 2015 about '*People, Plants and Prosperity*' that will be focused on agricultural biodiversity and Prince Charles is expected to give an address or keynote speech
- There will be a programme on BBC2 about food security and modern agriculture and NM is to be interviewed in May on the Lizard.

LS will report back to UK PGR following the 'Stimulating Innovation in Plant Genetic Resources' conference on 23 April, organised by the European Technology Platform, at Hotel Thon in Brussels. LS will be speaking at the conference.

13/11 WCMC Indicators Work Shop feedback (JJ)

JJ reported on progress.

13/12 Summer Technical Visit (NM)

NM thanked MA and MB for the summer/winter technical visit in 2012 and then asked for any ideas for the next technical visit. IT suggested a visit to the Welsh Botanic Gardens with IBERS, LS suggested a visit to the Innovation Farm but NM suggested it might be better to visit NIAB in 2014 possibly in association with the PGR Secure final dissemination meeting.

Action:

IT to arrange a visit to the Welsh Botanic Gardens with IBERS

13/13 AOB (NM)

BS will be retiring and will pursue personal interests. It's likely his replacement will be Neil Munroe. BFL is also retiring.

13/14 Date of next meeting / update on last Technical Visit

The date of the next UK PGR meeting is 16 October 2013.

Action:

BL to agree and then confirm the details for the next Technical visit.

13/15 @ 15.15 – Sonia Dias – EURISCO, GENESYS and the TIP update

Sonia Dias made a presentation to the Group about EURISCO, GENESYS and the TIP update. A copy of the presentation is at the site where this document is held: