MINUTES OF UK PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES GROUP MEETING 25 OCTOBER 2005

Present:

Mike Ambrose (Chair)	John Innes Centre	Emma-Jane Lamont	IC, Wye
		Dave Astley	WHRI
Brian Ford-Lloyd	Birmingham University	Ken Tobutt	EMR
Nigel Maxted	Birmingham University	Mervyn Humphreys	IGER
Niall Green	SASA	Gavin Ramsey	SCRI
Bob Sherman	HDRA	Martin Lewis	Defra
Simon Linington	Millennium Seed Bank		

05/12 Apologies for absence

1. Apologies received from:

Joan Cottrell	Forestry Commission
Emma Hennessey	Defra
Martyn Ibbotson	Defra
Angela Karp	R-Res
Fernando Latorre	Defra
Sue Williams	BSPB

Note: Michael Camlin (DARDNI) was unable to find the meeting room. Apologies to Michael for the confusion.

05/13 Minutes of the meeting held 23rd March 2005

2. Paragraphs 21,22 and 23 had been misnumbered and have been renumbered to read 24,25 and 26. New paragraph 24 should read “Wild Crop Relatives”.

05/14 Matters arising from previous minutes

3. Mike Ambrose had so far not been able to contact Frank Bisby, but would try one more time.

4. Mike Ambrose had made contact with Pam Berry of the Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford about Climate Change. Pam specializes in assessing the potential impact of climate change on ecosystems and selected groups of plant species and was interested in engaging with the Group. It was hoped that she would attend the next meeting when there would be a session on

climate change following the main meeting. Simon Linington mentioned a recent article on climate change by Wilfred Thuiller and Nigel Maxted undertook to circulate it to members.

05/15 International Treaty (IT) for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

5. A note on the IT prepared by Fernando Latorre had been circulated to members for information. Ken Tobutt and Dave Astley delivered a brief report on Access and Benefit sharing. Simon Linington expressed concern that the system of Certificates of Origin would not work and was adding additional work on collections whereas the onus should be on the user and not the curator. Mike Ambrose would raise it with Fernando Latorre and ask for a copy of the draft Standard Material Transfer Agreement for the Multilateral System to be distributed to the Group.

05/16 EU GENRES II Programme (EC Regulation 870/2004)

6. Mervyn Humphries reported IGER was acting as the main co-ordinator on an application for funding under the EU GENRES II work programme to further develop the European Internet Search Catalogue (EURISCO- formally known as EPGRIS) in order to fill gaps and improve characterization as well as enhancing the links between National Inventories and EURISCO.

7. Nigel Maxted reported that it had been decided not to submit the EGRISI proposal (lead is the University of Birmingham) in the first round of GENRES. Whilst full funding had been secured by the other collaborative institutions there was still a shortfall in the UK's contribution. Potential funding streams, including from Defra, would be explored with a view to securing full funding in time for the second call in early 2006.

8. Dave Astley stated he was involved in 2 applications. Ken Tobbutt said that a prunus project was being held back for the second call.

05/17 UK National Inventory of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

9. Mike Ambrose said the note of the special meeting of the Group held on 27 January to allow an in depth and detailed discussion of the recommendations of the Plant Genetics section of the UK National inventory of GFRA Report would soon be circulated (the note has now been circulated).

10. Martin Lewis explained that Treasury funding had been found for developing an internet portal to disseminate the UKGRFA Report. The process of

putting the work out to tender was under way and speed was essential as funding was only available for 2005/06 financial year. It was hoped a contract would be placed by mid December at the latest.

11. Nigel Maxted informed the meeting of work undertaken by MSc. Students at Birmingham that were direct contributions to the UK's efforts towards the targets of the Plant Diversity Challenge 2010. These including a Red List for the Uk, Biodiversity Action Plans for the UK and Ireland and a study on the genetic diversity and ecogeography of *Trifolium* and *Lolium* on St. Kilda.

05/18 European Cooperative Programme (ECP/GR) including a report on AEGIS (A European Genebank Integration System)

11. Bob Sherman reported that the ECP/GR were intending to place on its website a brochure setting out the work of ECP/GR. He had no precise information as to when this would go live.

Future of AEGIS

12. Ken Tobutt reported on the meeting of the AEGIS crop groups that had been held in Rome in June. The various groups (*Prunus, Allium, Avena* and *Brassica*) helped revise the "AEGIS Vision Paper", which the secretariat will be distributing widely. This stresses the advantages of European countries collaborating in conserving genetic resources and envisages a charter for participating governments and institutes to sign. The groups individually drafted plans for implementing the AEGIS approach; Ken had circulated the *Prunus* plan for consideration at the ECP/GR *Prunus* Working Group meeting in December

AEGIS/GENRES

13. Dave Astley reported that following on from the discussions at the first AEGIS meeting and in preparation for the second meeting the IPGRI Local AEGIS Task Force produced a draft Vision Paper for a European Genebank Integrated System. The Vision Paper was distributed to ECP/GR Steering Committee and the AEGIS crop subgroups for information and comment, but not for reproduction or reference.

05/19 Harvesting Diversity Conference

14. It had been hoped that Harvesting Diversity ll would be held in early 2006, but Martin Lewis reported to members that Defra resources (both financial and manpower) where not available to meet this timeline. This was disappointing news, and members agreed to suggestion made by Mike Ambrose that the issue should be further discussed at the next UKPGR meeting in March 2006.

05/20 Summer technical visit

15. Mike Ambrose thanked all those who attended the visit to John Innes Centre at Norwich in the summer. The consensus was that it had been very useful and informative. Mike Ambrose have been in contact with Michael Camlin to discuss a visit to Northern Ireland in mid September 2006, It was too early to finalise detailed planning but the visit would be spread over two days and at two sites (Plant Testing Station, Crossnacreevy and the Horticulture and plant Breeding Station at Loughall). Further details would be given at the March meeting.

05/21 Report on Sicilian Conference – Crop Wild Relative Conservation and Use (held 14-17 September 2005)

16. This was the first International Conference on CWR Conservation and Use, and incorporated the PGR Forum Final Dissemination Conference. The Conference was attended by 157 delegates from 45 countries and was a landmark in PGR conservation and considered a great success. The Conference:

- Provided a sign-post to conservationists and policy makers that CWR are vital resources that must be conserved and that action is needed now;
- Brought together a wide range of experts and user groups for the first time;
- Produced a draft Global Strategy for Crop Wild Relative Conservation and Use;
- Launched and publicised PGR Forum products including the Crop Wild Relative Information System (CWRIS);
- Introduced the new IUCN/SSC Crop Wild Relative Special Group (Nigel Maxted is joint Chair);

17. Nigel Maxted made the point that the proposed meeting between the UKPGRG, English Nature and JNCC to discuss the findings and implementation of finding to emerge from the UK National Inventory for Plant Genetic Resources had not yet happened. Mike Ambrose promised this would be acted on before the next Group meeting.

05/22 Report on European Workshop on National PGR Programmers, Belgrade

18. No report offered as Brian Ford-Lloyd did not attend.

05/23 AOB

19. The following items were raised:

- Bob Sherman informed members that Garden Organic is now the working name of HDRA;
- Niall Green brought the draft directive on seeds to the attention of members.
- Gavin Ramsey informed members about the initiative taken by the Global Crop Diversity Trust to raise $270m to upgrade collections of germplasm (more information at http://www.startwithaseed.org) .
- On the copyright issue that had been raised at previous meetings, Simon Linington said that Kew legal advice was, that provided all information on transactions was recorded, there should be no copyright problems. The wider implications of the copyright rules were still being considered and it was hoped to let members have advice by the next meeting.

05/24 Date of next meeting

20. Next meeting on 9 March 2006 (subsequently re-scheduled for 13 March starting at 13.00 at Defra, conference room G1, Whitehall Place West).

Defra
February 2006