

# Critical Components for a National Culture Collection System the Focus of Recent Workshop

*Scott Gold, University of Georgia, [sgold@uga.edu](mailto:sgold@uga.edu); Jeff Jones, University of Florida, [jbjones@ufl.edu](mailto:jbjones@ufl.edu); and Kellye Eversole, Eversole Associates, [eversole@eversoleassociates.com](mailto:eversole@eversoleassociates.com)*

Under the auspices of the APS Public Policy Board and the APS Ad Hoc Committee on Culture Collections and with support and participation from USDA-APHIS and USDA-ARS, a Workshop to Facilitate the Establishment of a National Culture Collection System (NCCS) was held November 13–14, 2007, at the USDA George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, MD.

Nineteen participants, representing APS, universities, industry, the Fungal Genetics Stock Center, USDA-APHIS, USDA-ARS, and the National Science Foundation, met to outline a draft of the critical components of a NCCS and to determine directions toward its establishment. The establishment of the NCCS is intended to provide efficient preservation of, access to, and retrievable documentation for important plant-associated microbial resources. The current lack of such a system is widely recognized as limiting to research efforts and potentially dangerous for our capacity to quickly respond to new disease challenges.

The meeting began with presentations on efforts to catalog USDA-ARS collections and with overviews from industry, stock center, and university representatives on the current status of and future concerns for existing collections. It was evident from presentations and discussions that there are a number of efforts by U.S. and international groups that parallel our goals. For example, the U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has ongoing efforts toward culture collection preservation; collaboration with OSTP and/or other groups could allow for significant leverage with any efforts to protect and preserve useful culture collections of plant-associated microbes.

A primary focus for this first workshop was to outline the critical components of a NCCS. Although the specific nature of the NCCS was not determined, two basic models were discussed: a centralized and a decentralized system. It was the consensus that a hybrid, decentralized “hub-and-spokes” system could best utilize existing resources while providing long-term stability. A driving force for this model was that the expertise associated with current taxon-specific culture collections is critical for their continued use and value. The Germplasm Resources Information Network (GRIN)



*Attendees with broad representation and expertise from academia, industry, and government participated in the workshop.*

