

Chapter 3

Partnerships and Collaborations

NAL continually takes advantage of opportunities to collaborate with other Federal agencies, state and local governments, universities, and libraries. These partnerships are designed to augment or extend NAL programs and to foster information and knowledge exchanges related to agriculture. In 2003, NAL advanced existing partnerships and initiated some promising new ones.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Library Services

Operating under the umbrella of the Federal libraries and Information Centers Committee (FLICC), NAL worked with several other Federal libraries to design an information infrastructure to support the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The partnering libraries recommended actions to DHS, including expansion of DigiTop licensing agreements to cover DHS inspectors needing access to science and technology resources.

NAL also participated in a FLICC-sponsored pilot-test of virtual reference services for DHS. Using e-mail and online chat, NAL joined a group of 11 Federal libraries to assess the effectiveness of policies and procedures, success with users, and ongoing need for the new electronic reference service.

Invasive Species

With North Carolina State University (Center for Integrated Pest Management), the Department of the Interior (<http://www.doi.gov/>), and the National Invasive Species Council (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/council/main.shtml>), NAL co-sponsored an October 2003 user requirements workshop for Federal Government agencies involved in issues relating to invasive species. Held at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the workshop identified the invasive species information needs of Web users and how they could be addressed through the across-government [Invasivespeciesinfo.gov](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov) (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>) website maintained at NAL.

**218/80
NAL Federal FTEs/
contractor FTEs,
FY 2003.**

Land-Grant System

As part of a 2003 initiative to expand cooperation with the land-grant system, NAL entered into cooperative agreements with several land-grant and historically black colleges and universities, including:

- The University of Arizona, to develop rangeland profiles linked to personal stories on the impacts of invasive plant species on individuals and communities;
- North Carolina State University, to develop mapping capabilities enabling display of county-level distribution data for invasive species, and;
- Howard University, to develop information products for USDA food assistance programs and to assist with food stamp database development.

Inter-American Cooperation

In June 2003, NAL participated in the IICA (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture) Procinorte meeting of the Agricultural Library and Information Services Initiative, where it renewed agreements with the Canadian Agriculture Library and the Antonio Narro University Library in Saltillo, Mexico, to enhance access to agricultural information in the northern hemisphere and across the Americas.

AgNIC (Agriculture Network Information Center)

In 2003, NAL continued to play an important role in the AgNIC partnership by providing staff support for the AgNIC secretariat and for maintenance and development of the AgNIC website (<http://www.agnic.org/>). The partners welcomed five new institutions: Colorado State University, Oglala Lakota College (AgNIC's first Tribal-College partner), Southwest Missouri State University, Universidad Autonoma Agraria Antonio Narro, and the National Wildlife Research Center of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The new members will provide additional subject coverage including wildlife damage management, bison resources, viticulture, Spanish-language theses on arid agriculture, and translated titles for USDA digital publications. With these new partner institutions, the AgNIC alliance membership now totals 45.

45
NAL partner
institutions in
AgNIC alliance,
September 30,
2003, an increase
of 5 since 2002.

Volunteer and Intern Programs

NAL began a volunteer program to provide customer-support assistance in circulation, ready reference, and special projects. Thus far, volunteers have included two high school students fulfilling community service requirements and seven other volunteers. Through a cooperative agreement with the University of Maryland libraries, graduate students specializing in archiving, preservation, and conservation are also gaining valuable field experience using NAL special collections.



Peonia officinalis. *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, Volume 43, 1816. Special Collections, National Agricultural Library.