

Report on Wheat PGR Workshop

11th International Wheat Genetics Symposium

Brisbane Australia

17:45-19:00 Tuesday 26 August 2008

Participants: Ca. 53 delegates

Agenda:

1. Global PGR Information System
2. FIGS set development
3. Global Wheat PGR Network

Global Plant Genetic Resources Information System

Chair provided outline of the global information on germplasm initiative: objectives, timeline and vision. In summary, a user designed conduit to available accessions and associated data. The project involves:

- Standards in data management and inclusion of capacity for FIGS trait mining;
- Curatorial and user interface to data – GRIN-Global;
- Portal to access a number of existing and developing systems including (but not limited to) SINGER, EURISCO and GRIN. So called global accession level information system.

Emphasised that the initial aim is to capture the requirements of germplasm users and harmonise this with nature of data available and information technology capacity.

It was advised that a number of user groups advised the Global Crop Diversity Trust (GCDDT) of requirement for additional data requirement to enhance utilization during development of the crop conservation and utilization strategies.

In first instance we require a limited set of wheat characterization and evaluation descriptors to include in first roll-out of ALIS. Of course necessary passport data is also included, but the characterization and evaluation descriptors chosen should provide users with some options for accessing and identifying candidate accessions for further evaluation/utilization.

There was positive input from a number of participants regarding the suggested first set of characterization and evaluation descriptors which will result in further discussion within a 'core advisory group' (CAG) prior to final selection of the 'roll-out' descriptors.

Other points made by participants included:

- Recognition that utilization is very trait driven (need for variation for a trait triggers action to identify and evaluate germplasm);
- Users want web access to information system;
- Awareness that data standards cannot be imposed – there has to be reasonable flexibility and users should be aware of this when using data.
- Those with ideas often don't have resources, while those with resources don't necessarily have ideas – so perhaps there is a need to re-think the key C & D descriptors being considered for some crops.

FIGS Set Development

Chair, together with Ken Street, provided another brief outline of FIGS to date. One participant raised the interest in developing a heat stress tolerance (during booting stage of growth) set of candidate accessions using the FIGS methodology.

Considerable discussion about approaches, methods and various other ideas were raised and considered. The idea was to openly discuss how a FIGS set could be developed in an attempt to give potential users some exposure to what is involved so they could consider the range of issues needing consideration in developing FIGS sets. It is believed this objective was achieved.

A clear conclusion is that the FIGS system is considered to have been successfully prototyped and now it should be deployed on a more global basis. How to achieve this is being considered, but there is clear support for its applicability to the global accession level information system.

Global Wheat PGR Network

After some discussion the participants indicated that they would like the network to remain as an informal contact point for intercessional issues and also provide an e-forum for other developments, such as discussion of data standards and updates on development of GRIN-Global, ALIS etc. It was suggested and agreed that participants would contact M Mackay by email so an email mailing list could be created to facilitate the informal network.

Postscript: Only about eight participants have registered their contact details with the chair as of 15 September 2008.

Chair: Michael Mackay m.mackay@cgiar.org (Bioversity International)