

NCPN Berries Meeting
April 15-16, 2019
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY

Participants: Bill Foote, David Lawson, Nate Nourse, Elizabeth Elwood Ponce, Jon Umble, Wendy O'Donovan, Christie Almeyda, Chad Finn, Bob Martin, James Polashock, Annemiek C. Schilder, Maher Al Rwahnih, David Prokrym, Erich Rudyj, Kevin Schooley, Margo Schooley and Sarah Trujillo (Facilitator). Guest Ruth Welliver

Sarah welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through introductions and expectations for the meeting. The agenda was a very robust agenda with a number of key issues to be discussed.

Identifying Gaps and Challenges for the Berry Network

CORVALLIS

Bob Martin is retiring in January 2020 and this will leave a gap in services presently provided at the Corvallis lab. Having addressed this upcoming event, it is necessary for the other labs to be able to pick up the additional workload in the interim until a new hire has been found to replace Bob.

Presently Corvallis has 2 new hires and 3 students (10 to 20 hrs) to perform testing at the facility. They have an OSU Foundation Endowment fund set up to support the program and it currently has \$80,000.

The testing fees charged are \$50 for a lab test, \$100 for a bioassay + lab test, and \$1000 for import materials.

The bioassay testing is mostly *Rubus* and the lab testing is predominantly blueberry (600) with the other 500 being other crops.

In 2018 Corvallis performed Bioassays on 506 genotypes from the screenhouse as well as from breeding programs and private programs (360). They fully laboratory tested the same 506 plants by ELISA and PCR for all targeted viruses and additionally fully tested 1136 additional samples by lab assays only (ELISA and PCRs).

Corvallis presently has a curation permit for maintaining the virus collection, a national testing permit, an international testing permit, CIP for *Fragaria* (10 genotypes), *Rubus* (5 genotypes) and vaccinium (18 genotypes) They currently receive plants from Australia, Chile, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand and Spain and have released 11 genotypes under the CIP permit.

Bob is suggesting that half of the funds be reallocated to Arkansas and North Carolina centers for the testing portion during the transitional period. The bioassay testing will remain in Corvallis. Grafting and Lab testing will be done at Corvallis in 2020

Bob noted that the EU will be requiring a recognized certification program by 2022 for movement of nursery plants into EU countries.

ARKANSAS REPORT

Ioannis reported on the status of the lab in Arkansas. There will be a need to hire additional staff and receive additional funding for the lab to increase the workload moving forward. The present cost of testing samples for the NCPN is approximately \$83/sample and this does not include equipment and facility costs. Ioannis stated that even without any changes in Corvallis the lab would need at least one additional CIP in the NCPN-Berries.

Ioannis stated that there is some flexibility in capacity at the Arkansas centre. If the bioassays continue to be tested at Corvallis, there will be the need to have the ARS technician continue to be funded by the NCPN. There will be a need to move some of the funding from Corvallis for the lab testing only to North Carolina or Arkansas. There is a need to obtain capacity numbers from Corvallis in order to be able to fill the gap until the position in Corvallis is refilled. At that time the division of responsibilities can be revisited.

Ioannis reported that if Arkansas commits to a development of a complete Clean Plant Center this would likely take 5 years in total to become self-sufficient and would require some NCPN support to get it to this point. After that the NCPN support would help to support the need for the development of diagnostics for the longer term. If Arkansas is unable to develop a fully integrated center much of the work would then fall onto the North Carolina facility. Ioannis has agreed to submit a proposal for funding for 2020.

North Carolina Report

Christie has recently taken over running the center in North Carolina. The center is currently finishing the analysis of the Spring and Fall 2018 samples as there was a backlog to be tested.

Presently NC has the following services

- Virus testing lab (Rubus, blueberries and strawberries)-End point RT-PCR and Real Time RT_PCR
- Tissue Culture Lab(Rubus, blueberries and strawberries)-Meristem tip culture and TC protocols
- Heat treatment capacity
- Indexing Greenhouse

- Screenhouse: G1 blocks-Rubus and blueberries
- Motherhouse Greenhouse: strawberry mother plants
- Repository
- Customized Deliverables: TC, Potted meristems, diagnostics

Currently they have 1 permanent position which is 90% funded by the NCPN and 1 temporary position which is funded 100% by a commodity grant. There is definitely room and willingness to expand with regards to space, labor and equipment. The immediate requirement would be at least 2 more staff members. Presently one person is able to test 16 samples for 12 viruses and have results in 1-week time.

Christie is presently working on obtaining an import permit, a curation permits and a testing permit for the facility. Christie has spoken to APHIS and everything looks good for December 2019. They have a structure in place to establish clean up, maintenance, do customized orders, diagnostics and propagation of clean material.

Christie has requested to get some numbers from Bob Martin so she can proceed with hiring the required number of staff to perform the testing required in the future. She has also requested that the industry submit their numbers by June for next spring.

Christie will send a request for bridge financing by June 1 to bridge the gap in financing from January to September 2020.

Nate and John will issue a letter to the industry and stakeholders behalf to APHIS, ARS PPQ leadership and the NCPN to address the urgency of the replacement of Bob Martins position at Corvallis.

Berries Website

The website for the berries portion of the NCPN was examined and the following suggestions for change were noted:

- Add a list of cultivars and varieties
- Add hyperlinks for each center for growers
- List the directors for each center
- Change the information for Jim Polashock
- Add open access papers as they are submitted

Education and Outreach

Margo reported that the education and outreach committee met in March and they are working towards developing a national communication plan to increase the amount of clean plants used and to keep them clean moving forward. The committee has a second meeting in June 2020 to formulate a plan to educate the policy makers and stakeholders. Target audiences

were identified as growers, breeders and nurseries. At the upcoming meeting a plan to develop the message to be conveyed and the method of delivery will be determined as well as the budget to carry out the task. After a discussion it was felt that we need to reach out to the extension people to deliver the message to the target audience. Breeders are a fairly small group and it was suggested that we develop a plan to connect them to the NCPN so they can see the benefits of using virus tested material for the breeding program. There may be some breeders in the southwest that are unaware of the program, so we need to research who they are and reach out to them in the future.

It was also suggested that we market the clean plant and not the network as the future of the network is not known. In the future it was suggested that the centers could possibly deliver a message to the parties identified as the target audience. Also, we could attend a breeder meeting to give a presentation on the advantages of using clean plant material.

A request for funding to the NCPN to implement the education and outreach plan will be made once the plan is finalized.

All of these suggestions will be presented at the upcoming education and outreach meeting in June to help formulate an efficient and effective communication plan for the future.

A discussion was led by Nate asking the committee if they would support a small executive group meeting to discuss small issues in the future, so the larger group did not have to be burdened with small tasks. Everyone agreed that this was a more efficient use of time and this will be implemented moving forward. Action items listed below from Sarah will be managed by the proposed champion.

Action	Champion	Timeframe
1. Send Center presentations and NCPN Update presentation to participants (Center directors and Erich send to Kevin)	Kevin	May 1, 2019
2. Send draft of the letter to the NCPN-GB	Jon/Nate	May 17, 2019
3. Prepare a letter (s) to send to APHIS/ARS(NPS)/PPQ leadership to stress the need to replace Bob's position as quickly as possible (come from all of Tier II with heavy signatures from industry) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What is the need? o What do you want? o When do you want it? And why? 	Jon/Nate	May 17, 2019
4. Write a letter to industry about the process for transitioning services (prior to and after retirement)	Bob Martin	May 17, 2019
5. Industry requests/orders to Christie and Yannis as soon as possible for next spring (cut off for confirmation – by June 1, 2019)	Industry/ Bob Martin	June 2019

<p>6. Industry reach out to state about certification and moving the certification process forward – from draft into the state legislative process (Need to request Farm bill funding (Goal Area 4) through their respective state) – implement based on state implementation requirements/processes (Pull in state reps: Dipak Poudyal: OR/ Cindy Cooper: WA/ Dave Marion:CA)</p>	<p>Jon Umble/ Dipak</p>	<p>June 2019 Submit proposal by Deadline</p>
<p>7. Yannis will write the proposal for 2020</p>	<p>Yannis</p>	<p>July 2019</p>
<p>8. Present concept at WERA-20 and APS Virology and Regulatory Committees. NAPPO. Move forward to international partners following WERA – 20. CONCEPT: Develop white paper with all NCPN groups to eliminate names that there is no known types of isolates to study. (Eliminate export problems associated with phantom agents) Unanimous support in moving forward.</p>	<p>Yannis</p>	<p>September 2019</p>
<p>9. Website Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of cultivars available on site • Update links – ensure they work • Link to centers on the site 	<p>Kevin/ Margo</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ioannis and seconded by Maher.