

**FROM: Report of a Working Group on Forages: Eighth meeting, 10-12  
April 2003, Linz, Austria**

***Definition and identification of Most Original Samples (MOSs)***

During the 1999 meeting at Elvas, the Group decided on a mechanism to define responsibility for the maintenance of the Most Original Samples (MOSs) in the forage collection. An algorithm was to be applied by the central crop database managers to provisionally classify the samples, and this classification should have been checked by the collection curators. However, little progress was made in the proposed mechanism, mainly due to difficulties in applying the algorithm in situations where important information was missing in the databases.

To speed up the process, collection curators were asked prior to the meeting to assign an "originality" descriptor to the accessions in their collection, either by using the algorithm or by going through their collections manually.

L. van Soest and P. Marum confirmed that the algorithm may yield odd results in some cases that need correction. For example, in the case of bred varieties the algorithm would almost never result in the identification of a MOS. It was agreed that when breeders donate samples of their own varieties to their national genebank with the aim of ensuring their long-term conservation, these samples should be assigned a "1" (i.e. MOS).

B. Boller showed the example of how MOSs were classified. A number of samples with no donor would be considered "original", but this information was checked against original data of the collecting missions, making it possible to confirm the originality of the samples. The samples put in category 3 by the algorithm needed to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Detailed knowledge of these samples enabled the curators to decide whether to confirm the category or not.

P. Marum confirmed that in the case of the Nordic countries, the algorithm would not work, since the Nordic Gene Bank only coordinates collecting missions and most of the samples were collected and donated by other Nordic institutions that do not conserve the samples themselves. Therefore most samples were assigned to category 1 even though the donor field was not empty.

E. Willner realized that samples collected in collaboration with the Czech Republic were assigned to category 1 by both Germany and Czech Republic and that a consultation is necessary to decide which genebank should be given the primary holding responsibility.

***Recommendation***

*The Group agreed that in all collaborative collecting missions, a consultation among the collecting partners should help in defining which genebank would be assigned the primary responsibility for any given accession.*

W. Majtkowski told the Group that very many MOSs are held by Polish genebanks and a second step of concentration would be necessary to ensure regeneration and continuing maintenance, possibly by establishing a national core collection. Similarly, I. Thomas said that the number of MOSs at IGER that are in need of regeneration is too large to be regenerated with their ordinary budgets, but additional funding had been secured from DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK) to regenerate some priority accessions and to create safety-duplicates.

In spite of these difficulties, the Group agreed that the identification of MOSs was a first and important step in obtaining benefits from sharing of responsibilities among genebanks. It must result in the assumption of the responsibility of maintaining an accession as its primary holder. The latter requires the involvement of CCDB managers to identify cases where more than one institute holds an accession with the highest level of originality.

*The Group aims at defining the primary holder of the accessions of the most important species by the end of 2003 and decides on the following:*

**Workplan**

1. Collection curators/WG members to add a descriptor "Originality" (ORIGINALITY) to the data they prepare for transmission to the CCDBs and assign it values of 1 to 5 for: 1 = "MOS"; 2 = "with MOS"; 3 = "one away"; 4 = "more away"; 5 = "unknown" according to Appendix I of the report of the seventh WG Meeting.
2. Collection curators/WG members to send information about originality to CCDB managers **by 1 July 2003**.
3. CCDB managers to analyze originality information and make a proposal for "Holder of primary collection" (PRIMCOLL) for each accession, i.e. holder of the sample with the highest level of originality, indicating specifically possible items that need clarification.
4. CCDB managers to send compiled data back to curators/WG members **by 1 October 2003**.
5. Curators/WG members to check compiled data, seek solutions for items that need clarification and approve proposal of primary collection holder **by 31 December 2003**.

*The Group aims at completing the action above **by end of 2003** for the following genera:*

Dactylis	Lolium	Phleum	Trifolium
Festuca	Medicago	Poa	