NRSP6 AGENDA BRIEF -- Regional Spring meetings, 2010

NRSP6 is up for renewal. A project proposal has been submitted with Executive Summary copied below. The external review was overwhelmingly positive: of 60 ratings (5 individuals scoring 12 areas) there were 58 "excellent" scores and 2 "good" scores. A few key comments from the report are quoted below. The full proposal, review, and all related NRSP-6 documents are posted on the genebank website: http://www.ars-grin.gov/nr6/.

Quotes from the NRSP6 External Review

- *The proposal is relevant, consistent with the mission of an NRSP, and supports several national priorities. Specifically, it addresses 6 of the 7 challenges identified in the Science Roadmap established by ESCOP.*

- *Team members observe that the amount requested, $150,000, is a very small investment, compared to the value received, for a national collection of international renown.*

- *Continued public support is appropriate. Funding through a state/federal partnership, as at present, provides the states with a role in project management*

- *Team members point out that the concept of transferring core project costs to an alternative [soft] funding source is not applicable to a gene bank/germplasm collection.*

- *The Peer Review Team is excited about the value of recent NRSP6 work on nutritional value and other societal values for potato, especially in light of the high levels of potato consumption in all areas of the U.S.*

NRSP6 project proposal FY11-15 Executive Summary

As the most consumed and most valuable US vegetable, potato substantially influences the farm economy and environment in many states. High value-added processing and high and regular consumption gives potato significant impact in all states with respect to the food economy and citizens' health. For these reasons, and because potato has more useful exotic germplasm than any other crop, there is much activity in federal and state breeding and research programs. NRSP6 is the only program in the nation responsible for providing potato genebank services. NRSP6 is the premier potato genebank in the world. Requests for NRSP6 germplasm were strong and were promptly filled. We not only preserved the materials, but conducted R&D that showed ways to make genebank techniques more efficient. We also discovered and characterized novel mutants/traits that will help users better exploit potato germplasm. We propose that the new project will place an increased emphasis on consumer-oriented traits, particularly nutritional ones. With some estimating that 1/3 of GDP will be spent on healthcare in the future, there is hardly a more important problem before society, and there are many unexplored opportunities for use of NRSP6 germplasm to address it. Recent restrictions on international germplasm collecting and sharing make what we already have at NRSP6 even more precious. While NRSPs are to transition to other funding sources, inputs from other partners have declined. Thus, we are asking for continuation of $150K per year in MRF funding. This proposed continuation of longstanding flat MRF funding represents a loss of buying power that will necessitate further streamlining/reduction of staff and germplasm evaluation projects and more efficient management

unless we can backfill with grants. Virtually all crop germplasm in the National Plant Germplasm System is genebanked in partnership with SAES. We believe that NRSP6 is a particularly good investment for MRF. It leverages about an 8-fold contribution of ARS, APHIS, UW and grant dollars by partner programs. NRSP6 gives SAES ownership of a renowned genebank for one of the nation's main food crops.