

**Northeastern Plant Diagnostic Network  
Regional Meeting Minutes  
January 31, 2007  
8:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

**Introductions and Welcome: George Hudler**

Meeting Participants:

George Hudler, Cornell University  
Karen Snover-Clift, Cornell University  
Karen Scott, Cornell University  
Mary McKellar, Cornell University  
Patty Clement, Cornell University  
Ann Hazelrigg, University of Vermont  
Cheryl Smith, University of New Hampshire  
Heather Faubert, University of Rhode Island  
David Clement, University of Maryland  
Bob Mulrooney, University of Delaware  
Nancy Gregory, University of Delaware  
Rob Durgy, University of Connecticut  
Carol Quish, University of Connecticut  
Sharon Douglas, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station  
Carolyn Klass, Cornell University  
John Baniecki, West Virginia University  
Bruce McPherson, The Pennsylvania State University  
John Payne, USDA APHIS PPQ  
Clay Kirby, University of Maine  
Bruce Watt, University of Maine  
Ruth Welliver, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture  
Sara May, The Pennsylvania State University  
John Peplinski, The Pennsylvania State University  
Grace O'Keefe, USDA APHIS-PPQ  
Laurene Levy, USDA APHIS-PPQ  
Renee Devries, USDA APHIS-PPQ  
Seong Hwan Kim, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture  
Sabrina Tirpak, Rutgers University  
Bess Dicklow, University of Massachusetts Amherst

**Announcements and Discussion Items: Karen Snover-Clift**

- Announcement about Dr. Gale Buchannan's presentation at Lunch:
- Changes to regional meeting agenda
- Tip of the month for diagnostics in NPDN News
  - this was spurred on by the diagnostics subcommittee breakout session
  - Ann Hazelrigg asked about a possible day long training
  - Cheryl Smith asked if Gail Ruhl's talk could go on the regional web site with notes

### **2005 Sample Processing: Karen Scott**

-Total of 18 labs contributing data to National Repository

-25, 991 records in 2006, 19,661 in 2005, 625 in 2004

-Cheryl Smith asked how many samples have been entered into PDIS not the number of samples uploaded to the national repository? We don't have access to PDIS numbers.

-Karen Snover-Clift: PPV Samples, not all in there, this year was a learning process, when we got the positive PPV fell behind in data entry.

-Ruth Welliver: Is there redundancy between what is being put in for CAPS and PDIS? ---Karen Snover-Clift: Yes, for now but with a unique identifier that if/when merge servers then will only show as a single sample.

-Is there talk of merging servers? Karen Snover-Clift: This is not known at this point.

-Cheryl Smith pointed out that CAPS does a lot that we don't do so makes sense to have two servers. Carolyn Klass pointed out that the US Forest Service has their own database as well.

-Bruce McPheron: This issue may be addressed by the review team. Issues may include the need to hire personnel for data entry as well as mistakes made in data entry so even if you reconcile there will be differences.

-Ruth Welliver: CAPS database is very restricted. PDIS also very secure. Cheryl Smith asked if there is some way to mark a PDIS sample as a CAPS survey sample to designate and link it. There is a place to do that but perhaps not to the same extent. Rob Durgy pointed out that this was approved by the Phase II committee.

-John Payne: A list of redundant databases would be helpful. This would allow us to identify them and work to reduce the redundancy it.

### **2005-2006 Regional Report: George Hudler**

-Thank you for sending in reports and meeting the deadline.

-Annual Report for 2006-2007 due **August 1, 2007**

-We will be asking for more information for this year's report. This is due to the fact that we are concluding the term of our five years of funding and it would be important to have more information. Most measurable information will be sample uploads and first detector numbers. Help us out to meet our goals. For the NEPDN regional report a major topic will be PPV. We have been doing survey processing for PPV for several years without a positive. We were able to keep up with the first positive in 2006 but it was the second find later in the fall that was difficult. What we did learn was that to keep people's eyes open and skills sharp as well as how important it is to remind them how important their job is. A question was raised about why we didn't involve other regions. We do not have a good answer for this. This may have been due to several factors such as a loss of control when samples leave the state. Additionally, there was a question of confidence in our regional infrastructure, supplies, equipment, etc. In years to come we need to have a better idea of what our capabilities are.

-Bruce McPheron: This is a perfect example of a great learning experience that could be applied nationally. To what extent have management practices been developed for this type of situation? How do you develop a catalog of resources in our region? What is the surge capacity in the NE?

-Sharon: Isn't this part of the accreditation process? Karen Snover-Clift: Accreditation is more about suspects not about ELISA at this point.

-Ruth Welliver: In the NE, there is a wide variation in who is doing the regulatory testing. In the NPDN, SDA's are listed as members, partners or other. If PA Dept. Ag was considered member then can use them as a resource. Which is more important politics or PPV? Obviously, PPV. Let's all work together.

-John Payne: What is the process of referral? Doesn't matter how much theoretical surge capacity if there is no mechanism for surge capacity. This experience with PPV is a case study to help develop a plan for referral and the development of surge capacity.

-John Baniecki: Survey for staffing patterns for when a problem does arise then we will know who has the personnel, if we don't have the personnel then what do we do.

-Bruce McPheron: This can be an important point to the national system. It can be used as a case study and may be more important than the first detector training.

-Karen Snover-Clift: This is a learning process. We did consider other obvious labs but told not to because the other labs were swamped.

-John Baniecki.: Another important point with this situation: networking with extension agents. Bruce Watt: Doesn't surge capacity imply that a lab is run under capacity? In order to have a surge capacity, you would need to hire someone that is doing nothing some of the time.

-Bruce McPheron: Other diagnostic labs (animal, etc.) have SOP's that address the issue of surge capacity. Who can help? Who can prioritize/triage and develop space and time to assist?

-Clay Kirby: From his experience, you bring in who can, secretaries, student help, etc. -George Hudler: This needs to be considered both regionally and nationally.

-Karen Snover-Clift: Last year we asked you to come up with end of year report. We will ask you to do this year, about what you have been presenting. FD training, samples processed, etc. for 2002-2003.

-We want information on samples processed based on how they are paid for: NPDN (covering the expenses of through the NPDN grant), DOA (if you process regulatory samples, funding from supplementals for CAPS program), Lab (normal lab fees). Finally, how the money was spent (5 distinct categories).

-Bruce McPheron: What you are trying to indicate leverage? But at the same time split among what funding contribute to what. Might be more helpful to just look at the money spent from each program and then pro-rate back against sample. This might help instead of trying to manage every dollar spent.

-Cheryl Smith: What about supplemental funding: any supplemental, no matter of its origin? Karen Snover-Clift: Yes. Cheryl Smith: Is there any way for you can remind us of what we got for supplemental? Karen Snover-Clift: Yes.

### **Upcoming Funding Update: George Hudler**

We have a half hour to talk about funding. Expect based on the continuing resolution that we will have the same amount of money this year as last year. So for states this will be between 30 K and 40 K. A large chunk is for salaries at the regional centers and then also for emergency situations. We will ensure that money gets out to our states. We need to address the slide from the talk two days ago that pointed out that states get 30-70 K. We have 12 states. This is different from each region. We invest a chunk of money to PDIS as well (70-90 K). Travel is a large part of our budget. On both sides, coming or leaving Ithaca. This is especially the case on a moments notice. There will be some SBR money through the IPM program. Allocation that came last year was a last minute arrival and we used the crop statistics to decide the allocation to states. Our next critical step is to include the entomologists and then weed science.

-Heather Faubert: We talked earlier about an additional 4K for travel? George Hudler: Yes, that should have gone directly to you. John Baniecki: How do we handle the expenses? George Hudler: Should have gone directly to the grant. Just file for in house travel reimbursement.

-John Baniecki: We do have soybean and have been doing monitoring. How can I ensure that we get money?

-Bruce Watt: The Maine situation: when money comes in, it is felt that this money is specifically for plant disease but shouldn't it be put to salaries? What we would like to do is hire someone part-time for decent consistent help, can we use the money for this? -Bruce McPherson: It was pointed out in the governance meeting that the university and Experiment Station was not as strong as it could be. Before the record of accomplishment the communication was really open. Let's keep that open.

-Bess Dicklow: Not getting money until November and can't enter PDIS samples real time because can't hire help and can't do both diagnosis and data entry.

-Question posed by Cheryl Smith about how many labs have base salaries? Not many in the region. Cheryl Smith: It was at first questioned whether or not it should go to salary but it is inevitable. George Hudler: Bruce McPherson's point is good: use some of this for leverage at the university level. Bruce McPherson : As administrators we are struggling with this, how do we maintain the public good and deal with this. Even within an institution there will be heterogeneity. Some of this is history and other things.

### **Website: Karen Scott**

-Statistics on web sites hits NE 64,000, NPDPN 158,000 hits

-Check your contact info and make sure that the info is up to date, contact Karen Scott with up to date contact information

-It is broken down by clinic, regional, SDA's and IT people

-State spotlight is a great place to highlight what you are doing, it is really something that it is being looked at. It doesn't have to be something that includes everything for the year. It can be focused on one event.

-Bruce Watt: I guess I would be the IT contact for Maine. Karen Scott: Yes, some people are listed more than once for different contacts. I am the regional contact but at the state level it is a resource for small issues.

-Karen Snover-Clift: Initially, it was envisioned that the IT person would be more involved in the report making process but it turned out it was something more that a diagnostician would do. Now when assigned a role as a diagnostician you are usually assigned IT rights as well.

-Bob Mulrooney: Question about web enabled digital camera, is it necessary.

Karen Snover-Clift: highly suggested.

### **PDIS Changes in review: Karen Scott and Karen Snover-Clift**

-PDIS 2

-Changes now for PDIS 1 will only be taken care of as needed (bug reports)

-Change requests will go on to PDIS 2

-Changes in 2006

-time period report: useful for end of reports, also to look up things that you need to find, enter in the start and end date, select which lab you want to use, and hit enter, available at any point in time, gives you how many samples, who processed them, advisory diagnosis

-Queue Update Button:

-Condensed Printing of Batch Reports and Invoices

-Confidence level changed: originally 6 confidences changed to 4 new confidence levels (confirmed, not detected, suspected, and inconclusive

-added method used field: 12 new methods available to choose from

-completed date text box

-modify report output: allows you to change what is printed in the host/habitat and diagnosis/ID fields

Bess: How do you deal with not having a sample designated? Karen

Snover-Clift: When you receive a response that state what you entered is invalid, there is an option to request what you are looking for.

-Batch archive feature: added to the system to reduce the time needed to move samples to Archive status

-additional diagnoses feature: can add up to 24 diagnoses to each sample

-PDIS Lab transfers: referral system should be used when transferring samples

-Questions: Bruce Watt: So when sample information from a referred sample comes back to Bruce then it is no longer in the Cornell system?

Karen Snover-Clift; It will still be in our system but all we can do is add comments. It is then up to you to complete diagnosis. Who will notify the result back from Beltsville? Your SPRO and/or SPHD. Laurene and Renee

pointed to out that they pass the information on and it is the SPRO/SPHD will need to contact the diagnostician. All reports for SOD state DNA extracted at Cornell, sample first diagnosed at X LGU lab. Referral in PDIS also has a place for tracking number. Right now an email is sent with this information but perhaps in the future it will just go through PDIS.  
-Bruce Watt: How does he send a sample to Clay via PDIS? Karen Snover-Clift: That is an internal transfer.

### **Exercise Readiness and First Detector Updates: Mary McKellar**

-Exercises to date: Completed first round of exercises in each state between June 2004 and June 2005. In 2006, 4 states completed exercises. Three exercises were conducted with *Ralstonia solanacearum* Race 3 Biovar 2. The fourth exercise was on Sirex woodwasp. We partnered with APHIS and the NJ Department of Agriculture on their full scale exercise for that one.

-Tentative plans for 2007: Spring: NH, VT, ME, CT  
Fall: WV, PA, DE, RI

-Importance of exercises: practice makes perfect! Although the process of chain of communication and custody is pretty much the same for all high consequence pests and pathogens, there are some major differences. It is good to go through the exercises at least once a year.

-First Detector Training Updates:

-790 Registered FD's to date in the NEPDN

-2005: trained 650 FD's

-2006: trained 140 FD's

-New things coming down the pipe to help with first detector training

-Currently available: NEPDN long distance learning modules available. Contact Mary McKellar for more information ([mem40@cornell.edu](mailto:mem40@cornell.edu)).

-Available summer 2007: online first detector modules

-both remove the impediment for some for face to face training

-Other updates:

-New first detector information page on the NPDN web site

-New updated training modules on the NEPDN web site

-New first detector test on the NEPDN web site

-Remember, register your participants. Numbers of first detectors is one way to measure outreach.

-If problems with the registration web site, [www.cbc.at.ufl.edu](http://www.cbc.at.ufl.edu), please let me know ([mem40@cornell.edu](mailto:mem40@cornell.edu)).

-All first detectors should get a monthly newsletter. Please contact me ([mem40@cornell.edu](mailto:mem40@cornell.edu)) or Carrie Harmon ([clharmon@ufl.edu](mailto:clharmon@ufl.edu)).

-Need a point of contact from each state for First Detector training. Will send out email to get that information after meeting.

### **Lab Accreditation: Karen Snover-Cliff**

- Minimum equipment level: biosafety cabinet, fine and macro balances, dissecting microscope, compound microscope, full set of pipettors, incubator, centrifuge, vortex, autoclave, refrigeration/cooler space, office equipment to include a computer and printer
- Highly recommended equipment: freezer, tissue grinder, ELISA plate reader
- Real time record keeping: PDIS
- Sanitation Capability: ETOH and Clorox
- Laboratory supervisor expertise: min. of bachelors, prefers a M.S. or a certain amount of experience in the lab
- Need dedicated spaces for each function
- If you want National accreditation, these areas need to be addressed.
- As an NEPN laboratory, we expect all labs to meet these min. guidelines

#### Questions:

-Bruce Watt: What is the importance as to how secure the lab is? Karen Snover-Cliff: For our inspection, it meant a lock on the door as well as a lock on a cabinet. This offers two points of security. We now have increased security for both server room and lab. There are both a card swipe system and cameras.

-Any interest from our region to sit on the accreditation program? Expect a rep. from each region. Cheryl Smith volunteered.

-Bess: What is meant by designated space? Different rooms? Karen Snover-Cliff: It just means a designated space like a PCR work station.

-John Payne: It will be worthwhile to put together a conceptual framework to have to work under. It is important that the accreditations line up so that accreditation in one group will not diverge from another.

-PDIS training upcoming? **CT and WV need training.....before growing season**

-Will we know when PDIS II is released? Way in advance....newsletter, conference call to announce it and discuss it. Will there be an easier way to backup data in each lab: will be able to save copies to hard drive (will require software installed on the computer).