

DISPATCHES

EPPO Workshop on the Maintenance of Nematode Collections

Wageningen, the Netherlands,
5 to 6 September 2017

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The ability of National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) to quickly and reliably detect and identify nematodes is critical for effective phytosanitary measures to be taken and to ensure safe transnational movement of plants and plant products. Laboratories are increasingly working under quality assurance systems (including accreditation) and need to have access to validated tests. In order to enable the development, validation and use of tests for the detection and identification of nematodes, it is essential that reference materials be well maintained and accessible. From 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2015, an EU project named Q-collect was funded by the EU Commission. The project aimed to improve the status of reference collections that are important to plant health, and the objectives of the project were to:

- make an inventory of existing plant pest collections in the European and Mediterranean region, and of their content,
- develop guidelines for quality standards,
- develop guidelines to improve the accessibility of these collections,
- design and build a network of reference collections,
- develop an info-portal on the internet to provide information on the outcomes of the project,
- disseminate results to stakeholders.

The project also aimed to support a network of national reference collections relevant to national and EU phytosanitary policy and to provide guidelines for preserving, maintaining and improving the quality and accessibility of national reference collections (specimens, tissue and DNA), thereby ensuring harmonisation of collection maintenance across Europe. The outcomes of the project were reviewed by the Panel on Diagnostics in Nematology, and the need for a specific workshop on nematode collections was identified to provide more guidance for nematology collections, in particular the maintenance of live collections. In addition, a Eupresco project on live collections of cysts and root knot nematodes had started and the Panel considered that a workshop would also provide greater opportunities to exchange information on such collections. The workshop was organised in conjunction with the Dutch National Reference Centre of the NPPO and was held on 5 and 6 September 2017 in Wageningen, the Netherlands. It was attended by 29 participants from 15 countries.

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The workshop started with a plenary session, with presentations from participants about the maintenance of their collections and on projects for collections.

The participants agreed that guidance on nematode collections should be drafted and that preparing an EPPO Standard would ensure that such guidance reached a large audience, as is the case with the EPPO Standard on Nematode Extraction. The main topics to be covered in this type of standard were identified, including the different types of collections (live/dead/*in silico*), their maintenance, culturing and storage, purification, and the metadata that should be available on biological material. Nineteen of the workshop participants agreed to send their Standard Operating Procedures on maintaining collections in their laboratories (translated into English or French) to the EPPO Secretariat by the end of 2017. As a next step, the SOPs will be used by an expert working group to draft an EPPO Standard on the maintenance of nematode reference materials.

More details on the meeting and presentations are available at

http://archives.eppo.int/MEETINGS/2017_conferences/Workshop_nematode_collections.htm

