

Forages Network

Working Group: Forages.

The **Forages Network Coordinating Group** consisted of seven members: Merja Veteläinen, Finland (Network Coordinator); Beat Boller, Switzerland; Lajos Horváth, Hungary; Chris Kik, The Netherlands; Petter Marum, Norway; Valeria Negri, Italy; and Evelin Willner, Germany.

The **Network Coordinating Group organized a self-funded *ad hoc* meeting** on 11 May 2009 in La Rochelle, France, in connection with the 28th Meeting of the Fodder Crops and Amenity Grasses Section of EUCARPIA. The participants attending the meeting were Evelin Willner, Petter Marum, Beat Boller and Merja Veteläinen.

Considering the inefficient fragmentation of the Forages databases (23), it was agreed to try to merge databases by taxa/DB manager and to obtain confirmation from the DB managers and the respective institute about the availability to continue the management of the related databases.

In situ and on-farm conservation were reiterated to be important activities for conservation and use of forages. A preliminary inventory of existing European conservation sites was thought to be the first important step to enhance this activity and Beat Boller, Switzerland, agreed on the task to provide information about the development of a Swiss solution for *in situ*/on-farm conservation at the next WG meeting.

With regard to the AEGIS activities and the expected submission of a project proposal under the EU 7th Framework Programme (FP7) Capacities Work Programme 2010, Research Infrastructures, the Group expressed the need to review and update different guidelines (collecting, regeneration, etc. of forage crops) developed by the Forages WG and to compile them into one single publication to be used by the forage crop germplasm holders. The Group also thought that a forage crop (e.g. perennial ryegrass or red clover) should become a model crop for AEGIS, since these crops are generally cross-pollinating and thus more problematic to characterize and evaluate than self-pollinating crops. Thus there is an urgent need to establish a common method. On the other hand, there is already a well-established cooperation between plant breeders and germplasm curators in this field.

The report of the meeting is available at:

http://www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/Networks/Forages/Ad_hoc_Forages_NCG_La_Rochelle_2009_final.pdf

The Forages Network did not submit **proposals for funding to the AEGIS Grant Scheme**, but decided to send an application for the second call.

Outlook for 2010: activities planned by the Network include the Tenth Meeting of the Working Group on 27-29 April 2010, Poel Island, Germany.