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The Germplasm Resources Information Network: Easy Access to Soybean Germplasm Data

Soybean Genetics Newsletter

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The Germplasm Resources Information Network (GRIN) is a computer database maintained by the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS). It is a central repository for detailed descriptive information for most plant germplasm maintained within the National Plant Germplasm System. This information includes: various types of passport (or introduction) data; complete and recently verified taxonomic nomenclature and geographic standards; the ARS-funded location at which the germplasm is stored and maintained as well as associated inventory data; characterization and evaluation data including environmental conditions under which trials were conducted and publication citations concerning these trials; and descriptors and code values used with the crop description information. Twenty-four germplasm maintenance sites participate by updating, adding, and deleting information through telecommunication access to the central computer located in Beltsville, Maryland. This keeps all data current and leaves responsibility for its integrity to those best suited to determine its validity.

Direct access to this information is possible for any plant scientist within the United States, Canada, and Mexico, as well as scientists affiliated with international agricultural research centers. A "user-friendly" interface is available to assist researchers with little or no computer experience in obtaining the information they desire. Users can also take advantage of data manipulation software to select only the germplasm that fits their specific criteria. During a computer session, users may submit orders for this germplasm directly to the responsible maintenance site. After obtaining an access code from the GRIN Database Management Unit, individuals only need a computer terminal or personal computer with telecommunications ability to access GRIN.

At this time, GRIN contains some data for all soybean accessions held at both the Northern Soybean Collection, Urbana, Illinois, and the Southern Soybean Collection, Stoneville, Mississippi. Taxonomic nomenclature exists for 24 species in the Glycine genus. Passport information is available for 7,389 and 2,980 samples held at the Northern and Southern collections, respectively. Duplicates for this germplasm are stored at the National Seed Storage Lab in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Characterization and evaluation data are available for 9,621 samples.

For assistance and/or additional information on GRIN, or to obtain an access code and user documentation, please contact:

Database Manager
USDA/ARS/PGGI/GRIN, BARC-W
Building 001, Room 130
Beltsville, MD 20705, USA
Telephone: 301-344-1666

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