

Gatersleben, 1.07.2016

Dear colleagues and users of genetic resources,

The Federal *ex situ*-Genebank is proud of its history of providing seed samples and other reproductive plant material to users all over the world. Since 1952 more than one million samples have been shipped, to respond to requests from researchers, plant breeders, teachers, farmers or amateurs interested in exploring crop plant diversity. The global demand for genetic resources from IPK has steadily grown in recent years and is the result of high quality standards that have been employed in the characterization, storage and regeneration of the collections and that are implemented by a quality management system certified according to ISO 9001.

Over the past decades innovations to improve the quality of conservation of the collections such as the development of *cryo*-preservation of vegetative crops, the refurbishment of the laboratories, greenhouse and storage facilities, improvements in field and harvesting technologies, and the development of user-friendly online documentation and ordering systems have taken their financial toll. At the same time costs for fuel and electricity have increased steadily. In addition, handling costs have considerably increased as a result of a growing administrative load, including the management of formalized transfer agreements and phytosanitary requirements.

As a result of the increase in handling costs over the past decade the Federal *ex situ*-Genebank has decided, in close agreement with its donors and its advisory boards and in accordance with the provisions of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the mandatory Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA) prescribed therein, to introduce a handling fee for distribution of its samples, starting July 1, 2016. This fee is required to cover additional costs of the handling of requests for genetic resources in our collections. It will contribute to the sustainability of the Federal *ex situ*-Genebank and ensure high quality services and thus contribute to the conservation and utilization of biodiversity for food and agriculture.

IPK, June 2016
Prof. Andreas Graner
Head of Federal *ex situ*-Genebank
for Agricultural and Horticultural Crop Species