

## **FY 2021– NCPN Criteria for New Specialty Crops Seeking Program Entry and Support**

### **Criteria for the addition of new crop groups into the USDA National Clean Plant Network**

#### **Purpose:**

*With this Appendix, the National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) provides criteria for the entry of new crop groups into the Network. Individuals who would like to propose the entry of an additional crop group should draft a crop entry recommendation, citing specific criteria below that apply, and then forward that proposal to NCPN Management Team at: [ncpn@usda.gov](mailto:ncpn@usda.gov). Please note that you will also have to complete a full proposal with work plan and detailed budget during the Request for Proposals (RFP) period.*

#### **New Crops Seeking NCPN Support for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021:**

- The NCPN FY 2021 RFP provides in-depth information about the criteria that need to be met in order to receive NCPN support for new crops seeking entry into the Network. Many of the major points regarding criteria for crop entry into the Network are also captured in various places in the main body of the NCPN FY 2021 RFP.

#### **Background:**

The Network is currently comprised of seven crop taxa organized as follows:

1. Fruit and Nut Trees --- stone and pome fruits in the genera *Malus*, *Prunus*, and *Pyrus*. This includes ornamentals as well as fruit bearing trees and nut trees in the genus *Prunus*.
2. Grapes --- all fruit and ornamentals in the genus *Vitis*, including the muscadine grapes.
3. Hops --- *Humulus lupulus* and its associated varieties.
4. Berries --- members in the genera *Fragaria* (Strawberry), *Rubus* (Raspberry, Blackberry, and other bramble/cane fruit), *Vaccinium* (Blueberry and Cranberry), *Ribes* (Currant and Gooseberry), *Sambucus* (Elderberry) and edible *Lonicera* (Honeysuckle).
5. Citrus --- including members of the genus *Citrus* and related genera in the Rutaceae as determined by the needs of industry.
6. Sweet Potato --- *Ipomoea batatas*, both edible and ornamental varieties.
7. Roses --- all members of the genus *Rosa* as requested by industry.

#### **New Crops:**

Individuals in the existing seven Network crop groups actively worked to form and launch the clean plant program during 2005-2008. From this perspective, these crops were selected based on the input from their respective industry, university and state cooperators. These taxa are economically important and are known to have high-consequence, propagation-transmissible pathogen threats. Since the Network's inception over a decade ago, Network managers have occasionally received inquiries from individuals seeking information about the criteria under which other crops may seek entry into the Network.

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### **Criteria for New Crop Entry into the Network:**

Network participants and managers have operated under stated or assumed criteria under which crops and associated clean plant facilities can seek entry and support. When drafting a recommendation for new crop entry into the Network, individuals should confirm and explain how the target crop meets the following entry criteria:

- Specialty Crop Requirement:
  - Supported crops must be defined as a specialty crop under the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004; 7 U.S.C. 1621 note; Public Law 108-465).
  - Please see <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop> for more information.
  
- Prohibited Crops:
  - Priority for NCPN entry and support is given to specialty crops that would be restricted in importation unless initially processed through a clean plant center capable of handling potentially infected plant materials. This priority focus does not preclude similar plant varieties from being submitted from domestic sources such as germplasm or other collections.
  
- Applicant Entity Eligibility:
  - Financial support from the Network is limited to the following entities that serve as clean plant centers or program cooperators:
    - Land-Grant Universities
    - Non Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture
    - Non-Profit Organizations
    - State Agricultural Experiment Stations
    - State or Local Governments
    - Federal Agencies
  
- Industry Focus:
  - Priority is given to specialty crops and associated clean plant centers that become part of the Network and conduct diagnostics and therapy on select specialty crop plant material requested by industry. Additionally, support is provided for the establishment and maintenance of this material in G-1 foundation/nuclear/mother blocks.
  
- Existing Facilities:
  - Preference is given to institutions or agencies with existing and established facilities associated with clean plant programs and the capability to conduct plant pathogen molecular and biological diagnostics, apply therapies, and establish and maintain foundation/nuclear blocks of clean plant material.

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- *Program Circumscription and Operations:*
  - The purpose of NCPN is to support clean plant centers engaged in diagnostics with the intent of conducting therapeutics as necessary followed by the establishment of clean plant material in foundations for recurring distribution to the public or owners.
  - Network funding is targeted to programs that diagnose and treat against vegetatively-propagated, graft-transmissible plant pathogens, and establish ‘clean plant’ foundation/nuclear plantings, including those maintained by governments, land grant universities, or non-land-grant colleges of agriculture.
  
- *New Crop Self-Advancement and Readiness:*
  - New crops seeking NCPN support should have advanced sufficiently with basic research needed to develop diagnostic tools, therapeutic capabilities, and foundation concepts to readily capitalize on inclusion in NCPN and associated NCPN support to ‘operationalize’ research already conducted. This would include at least a basic understanding of pathogen pressures on that crop and associated impacts, an understanding of needs, and a prioritization on how NCPN support might best be used in addition to other sources of funding already available for the clean plant support of the specialty crop.
  
- *Program Governance and Administration:*
  - Since the purpose of the program is to establish a ‘network’, representatives of all specialty crop groups seeking NCPN entry support must form, or be in the process of forming, an inclusive ‘Governing Body’ to administer activities covering clean plant needs for that crop.
  - The forming Governing Body must have a Chair, Vice-Chair, and an Administrative Coordinator.
  - Members of the Governing Body must operate under a self-administered Charter, and be composed of voting members representing science, education/extension, the regulatory community, and relevant industry. Such members must include, or at least reach out, to all known facilities engaged in the ‘clean-up’ of the crop in question with the intent of ascertaining the full scope of a network in support of clean plant activities associated with the specialty crop.
  - These Governing Bodies meet regularly and help the Network establish priorities and harmonize proposals. These Governing Bodies also work with each other to understand and harmonize needs across the entire Network.
  - As appropriate, the representatives of a new crop seeking NCPN entry and support can petition an existing Governing Body to expand its Charter to include the new entrant as appropriate.
  
- *Program Clean Plant Center Inclusiveness:*
  - The representatives of all crop groups seeking NCPN inclusion and support must include, or at least reach out, to all known domestic facilities engaged in the ‘clean-up’ of the crop in question.

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- *Propagatively Borne Pathogens:*
  - Network program funding primarily targets propagatively-transmitted plant pathogens (graft-transmissible plant pathogens) found in specialty crops that are vegetatively propagated.
  - Network support is largely focused on mitigation of plant diseases caused by viruses and related organisms; however, clean plant facilities in the Network are also authorized to work on other pathogens as necessary to ensure the health of their foundation stocks.
  
- *Characterization of Pathogen Threat:*
  - When proposing a new crop group, representatives should be able to characterize pest threats to existing plantings (within the same specialty crop, or across specialty crops for certain pests) from especially injurious or fast-moving pathogens that may be targeted by a clean plant program; as well as demonstrate that the pest threats are of a nature that exclusion/prevention/control through individual grower initiatives are not practical or possible.
  
- *Phytosanitary Trade Implications:*
  - Network support is directed to specialty crops with significant phytosanitary trade implications (risks or benefits, import or export) that may be created or resolved through a coordinated clean plant network approach.
  
- *Characterization of Farm-Gate Value:*
  - Individuals recommending a new specialty crop seeking NCPN entry and support should characterize the farm gate value of nursery stock produced annually for the specialty crop and whenever possible, the farm gate value of commodity itself (e.g., fruit) produced by the industry or its associated products.
  
- *National Clonal Germplasm Repositories:*
  - Priority is given for those specialty crops that are or could be associated with an existing USDA supported national Clonal Germplasm Repository which could serve to house such plants in the event that clean stock is no longer requested regularly from an NCPN supported foundation yet it is advisable to retain the germplasm.
  
- *Nursery Certification Programs:*
  - Priority is given to the diagnostics and therapy for specialty crops where there is expressed interest from state governments to support state certification or related programs for nurseries and growers.

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- *NCPN Program Support:*
  - NCPN funds should not be used to replace other sources of funding already ascribed to a program.
  - NCPN support should be considered supplemental to other streams of funding already supporting a new specialty crop clean plant initiative.
  - The Network encourages applicants for entry and funding to seek and secure program funding and income generating opportunities in addition to those funds requested from NCPN.
  - Representatives for new specialty crops seeking NCPN support should characterize its plan for program support and sustainability, and the role that NCPN support plays in the plan.
  
- *Prohibition on the Use of NCPN Funds:*
  - NCPN funds may not be used to support certain activities, including:
    - Routine diagnostics or other activities to support initiatives other than those that are core to the mission of the Network.
    - Construction projects.
    - Nursery certification programs.
    - Basic research initiatives.
    - General surveys for plant pathogens in nurseries, grower’s fields, similar situations, or in the environment.
    - Trueness-to-type plant evaluations.

