

Collecting of forages in Central Asia

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Introduction

Following the first joint expedition to Uzbekistan in 1997 (van Soest *et al.*, 1998; van Soest, 1998), a second multi-crop expedition was conducted in August 1999. This expedition was a joint mission between the Academia of Sciences of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the N.I. Vavilov Research Institute of Plant Industry (VIR) and the Centre for Genetic Resources, the Netherlands (CGN). The mission was funded by CGN, with received financial support through the Dutch Seed Trade Association (NVZP). In Uzbekistan the team included 4 members whereas in Kyrgyzstan the team was extended with two Kirghiz researchers.

The expedition collected both on markets and in wild vegetations. Although the mission concentrated predominantly on the collection of a number of vegetable; crops several forages could be also sampled during the mission.

Collecting activities and material sampled

The team collected both in Uzbekistan, particularly areas of the Fergana Valley and in mountainous areas of East Kyrgyzstan surrounding this valley. The members of the mission travelled nearly 3000 km in both Uzbekistan and Kyrgystan. The germplasm of the forages were obtained from the following sources:

- Roadsides and along small rivers
- Natural grasslands
- Mountainous areas and valleys in the mountains

Passport data were collected and the latitude and longitude were determined with a GPS Tracker. Furthermore observations regarding the grazing of cattle were made.

The mission collected 50 accessions of 10 different forage species (Table 1.). Some of the accessions need further taxonomical identification.

Table 1. Forages collected in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1999

Species	Number of accessions	Altitudes Range (m)	Genebank responsible for maintainence
<i>Dactylis glomarata</i> L.	7	1120-2250	VIR
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i> L.	1	1640	VIR
<i>Medicago</i> spp.(blue type)	7	925-1850	VIR
<i>Melilotus officinalis</i> L. Pallas	10	1120-2250	VIR
<i>Melilotus alba</i> Medicus	1	960	VIR
<i>Trifolium repens</i> L.	9	1240-1820	CGN and VIR
<i>Trifolium pratense</i> L.	12	1120-1790	CGN and VIR
<i>Vicia</i> spp.	2	1640-1900	VIR
<i>Hedisarum coronarium</i> L.	1	1285	VIR
<i>Cicer arietinum</i> L.	1	1680	VIR
Total	51		

Conclusion

The expedition collected interesting forage species in the Central Asian Centre of Origin, region 5 according to Zeven and De Wet (1982). This region is not considered as the Centre of Origin of most of the collected forage species and this type of germplasm has not received much attention

during previous expeditions in this region. Therefore, the collected material can be considered rather unique plant genetic resources.

The collected material will be regenerated by the VIR and CGN and thereafter made available to potential users.

References

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