

- Return to: 1) ~~Dr. M. G. Partridge~~
 2) ~~Dr. R. L. ...~~
 3) ~~Dr. Stoner~~
 4) EBL

FAS
 OFFICIAL FILE
 COPY

MAY 12 1982

Agricultural Counselor
 American Embassy
 Mexico, D.F., Mexico

Dear Sir:

This is to confirm our telephone conversation of April 1, concerning the permit to obtain anticancer plants from Mexico.

The program for procurement of crude natural products for anticancer screening sponsored by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), was terminated in early October; however, funds were provided for some re-collections including those species mentioned in my letter of January 6. Recently, after a close re-evaluation of available funds, travel plans to Mexico were canceled. A mini-reorganization is now underway for a high priority project to acquire world germplasm.

The National Cancer Institute will continue to screen novel compounds, but will rely on donations. Chemists, previously working under NCI funds, will seek grants to finish isolation of active antitumor agents. I held the permit in the event one of our chemists decided to finance procurement of re-collections still needed from Mexico. Following my telephone conversation with you, I checked on this possibility, but that seems impossible this fiscal year. The collecting permit is herewith enclosed.

Thank you very much for sending the permit, and I appreciate your followup to inquire if it had been received. I apologize for the delay in advising you of my canceled travel to Mexico. A memorandum I received from our Institute Office some time ago indicated that you would be notified of the cancellation.

We hope we can look forward to your assistance in the future, as Mexico is certainly a major source of germplasm.

Sincerely,

Richard Spjut

RICHARD W. SPJUT, Botanist
 Economic Botany Laboratory
 Building 265, BARC-East

Steve Washenko 5/10
 Forwarded, Foreign Agricultural Service

Enclosure

cc:
 FAS
 R. Neetz, OICD-STE

SEA
 CCO *file 5/6*

4/27/82
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REP 5/5

per 5/3/82
4/28/82



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Science and
Education
Administration

Agricultural Research
Northeastern Region
Beltsville Agricultural
Research Center

Beltsville
Maryland
20705

March 5, 1982

SUBJECT: Your Memorandum of February 26

TO: Allan K. Stoner, Chairman
Plant Genetics and Germplasm Institute

I respect your decision on the Mexico trip and appreciate your writing to our Agricultural Counselor, John Montel. In case you want to telephone him, dial 9-905-553-3333. If Dr. Montel is not available, ask for Henry Fischer. Henry usually handles most of the detail concerning my trips to Mexico.

I am very disturbed over a number of other statements in your memorandum. You and Dr. Duke imply that our Agency's obligation is to supply 30 re-collections, nothing more and nothing less. I don't agree with your (or Dr. Duke's) philosophy on this (see Dr. Duke's note attached to my reply on a special request for a moss re-collection). I see my responsibilities as providing my best (of my abilities to any program), and not the least amount of work acceptable to NCI.

NCI gave us \$200,000 and I feel it is our responsibility to utilize these funds to the best of our abilities. Thirty re-collections may be an acceptable level of achievement. The cancer staff has dwindled to 30% of what it was last October, providing additional funds for re-collections. Mae has been converting old funds (targeted for general samples) to purchase re-collections. Thus far, little of FY82 money has been utilized for re-collections, and now we are asking suppliers not to collect plants because we may exceed our obsessed quota of 30 re-collections. What will happen to FY82 cancer funds not spent on procurement of re-collections? On the other hand, if we can barely afford 30 re-collections using old money, how would we have obtained our usual 60 re-collections with a salary expenditure level of last October?

With regard to my remaining responsibilities to be completed as soon as possible, I have no control over incoming re-collections. Your memorandum alludes to the possibility of my holding up projects of high priority to the Agency. I have already offered you and Dr. Perdue my willingness to start on germplasm (even during off duty hours). I have suggested to you that I could modify my trip to Mexico for germplasm and pointed out that Drs. Barclay and Craddock had a trip planned for Mexican germplasm. But, as I recall, you felt there might be a conflict with cancer needs. Moreover, no one has yet defined germplasm assignments and objectives to me.

RICHARD W. SPJUT, Botanist
Economic Botany Laboratory

cc:
J. A. Duke



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February 26, 1982

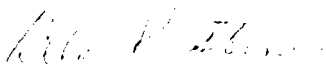
SUBJECT: Travel to Mexico for Cancer Collection

To: Richard W. Spjut
Botanist
Economic Botany Laboratory

In response to your memo of February 22 and earlier discussions about your proposed collecting trip to Mexico, it is my decision that you should not go. Our Agency's obligation to the National Cancer Institute in FY 82 is to provide them with 30 recollected samples of plant material. It is my understanding that we will be able to accomplish this without obtaining any additional material from Mexico. I also have the impression that Dr. Matthew Suffness has not expressed any strong feeling that we obtain any Mexico recollections as long as we meet our overall quota.

In view of our Institute's extremely tight budget and limited travel ceiling for FY 82, I do not feel that we can afford to have you travel to Mexico just so we do not upset our Agricultural Counselor. I will write to him explaining that the National Cancer Institute no longer considers plant screening for anticancer compounds a high priority and has, therefore, withdrawn its financial support making it impractical for you to follow through on your planned trip. I feel certain that he will accept this decision.

Your remaining responsibility to the anticancer collection program is to wrap up what remains to be done from your recent Australian trip and to help process the remaining incoming recollections. I expect all of this to be completed as soon as possible so that you can move on to projects that are of high priority to our Agency. How well we as individuals and as an Institute respond to these priorities is going to in large part determine whether we survive or not.


ALLAN K. STONER, Chairman
Plant Genetics and Germplasm Institute

cc:
J. A. Duke, Chief, EBL



United States
Department of
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Agricultural
Research
Service

Northeastern Region
Beltsville Agricultural
Research Center

Beltsville, Maryland
20705

February 22, 1982

SUBJECT: Field Work Planned for Mexico

TO: Allan Stoner
Chairman, PGGI

THROUGH: James Duke
Chief, EBL

The American Embassy in Mexico has probably obtained permits necessary to conduct field work there. As far as they know, I plan to leave here on March 1, 1982. In several letters, they have requested forwarding addresses to which I have not replied; they will probably telephone me this week or next.

Considering the amount of red tape involved to secure collecting and export permits and one previous problem with our Agricultural Counselor, I strongly recommend that we go ahead with the field work. We can't forget that our Agricultural Counselor, Mr. Montel, was very angry over a delayed reimbursement of something less than \$150. What will be his reaction this time, if we decide to change our mind or continue to ignore him?

Personally, I think it is bad business to make a commitment and then suddenly break it. A negative decision could prove to be more expensive than we might now realize. In some ways, this situation evolving is reminiscent of Australia; a sudden change in direction with no response to unfinished matters.

A tentative trip to Mexico was discussed with you and Jim (separately) in December and I do not recall any negative reactions. On the other hand, Matt Suffness has expressed his desire to obtain Mexico recollections. A subject letter sent through channels took nearly three weeks before it finally cleared, plenty of time for one to change his mind.

I realize a mini-reorganization now occurring makes it difficult to reassess travel ceilings and weigh old cancer needs against new priorities such as germplasm, but we have a commitment to follow through with. Since Jim is negative on this trip due to travel ceilings and other reasons, I have suggested, as an alternative, a shorter trip, or keep it brief as possible.

RICHARD W. SPJUT
Botanist
Economic Botany Laboratory

JAN 20 1982



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Foreign
Agricultural
Service

Office of
Agricultural
Counselor

American Embassy, Mexico, D. F.

January 19, 1982

Dr. Richard Spjut, Botanist
Economic Botany Laboratory
Science and Education Administration, USDA
Building 265, BARC-East
Beltsville, Maryland 20705

Dear Dr. Spjut:

We received your two letters of January 6, 1982 along with your plant list and are proceeding to secure your collecting and export permits. They probably will not be received before your arrival in Coahuila. Therefore, will you please furnish us with mailing addresses for the above mentioned State so that we can forward your permits.

Regarding your jiffy bags containing additional specimens of your 1980 collection, we will be glad to notify the three institutions involved for pick-up action as soon as they arrive.

Best success in your current field work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thom E. Montel".

Thom E. Montel
Counselor for Agricultural Affairs