



Healthy Plants • Healthy World

December 4, 2003

Raymond H. Cypess, D.V.M., Ph. D.  
President and CEO  
American Type Culture Collection  
10801 University Blvd.  
Manassas, Virginia 20110-2209

Dear Dr. Cypess:

Recent personnel changes at the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) have come to the attention of the American Phytopathological Society (APS). The APS, founded in 1909, is the premiere educational, professional and scientific society dedicated to the promotion of plant health and plant disease management for the common good. The Society represents the interest of almost five thousand scientists whose pivotal research advances the understanding of the science of plant pathology and its application to plant health. The termination of Dr. U. B. Gunasinghe's employment with your organization has led to questions about the future status of and support for the Plant Virus Collection (Collection) at the ATCC. Of particular concern is the short and long term plans for maintaining the Collection in the absence of a qualified curator. Specifically, questions have arisen regarding if and how ATCC will continue acquiring, authenticating, storing and providing plant viruses, cloned viral sequences, and antisera to the plant health community for a fee. Understanding the intended commitment of ATCC to the Collection and providing that information to our membership will allow those who depend on the ATCC to plan their research, outreach and instructional programs accordingly. Because questions are currently being asked by members of APS, a timely response on the course that ATCC will take in regards to support of the Collection will facilitate the management of rumors regarding the commitment of ATCC to the scientific community of plant pathologists, virologists and diagnosticians.

The Plant Virus Collection at ATCC is one of the few plant virus collections in the world and the best in the United States. APS has always worked closely with ATCC, and I hope an expedient response regarding the current staffing situation can be obtained so that our organization may move forward with yours to address concerns regarding this valuable resource of preserved and authenticated material to the plant health community.

Sincerely,

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