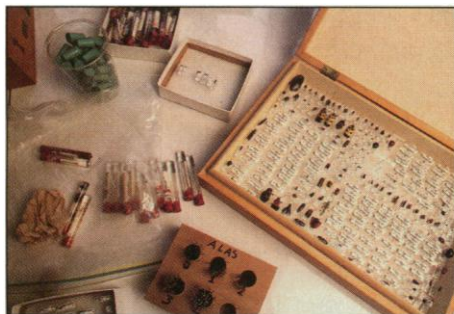


edited by RICHARD STONE



Contraband no more? Rule changes may allow unidentified specimens, such as some of these insects from Costa Rica, to cross U.S. border.

According to Elaine Hoagland, executive director of the Association of Systematics Collections, FWS has agreed to exempt scientific institutions from many of the proposed rule's requirements. The changes, says Hoagland, "will solve virtually all the problems" concerning specimen shipments.

But specimen collectors may not want to pop the champagne corks just yet. For one thing, FWS officials contacted by *Science* refused to confirm any specific changes in the rule because, they said, the revisions are still in internal review and could be altered. In addition, Congress may impose a moratorium on new regulations that would leave standing the current rule on specimen shipments, which scientists complain is ambiguous enough to cause them fits. If all goes well, however, a new draft of the proposed rule is expected to appear in the *Federal Register* next month.

Breakthrough on Specimen Shipping?

U.S. scientists appear to have dodged a regulatory threat to their efforts to identify and track species outside the United States. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is expected to revise a draft rule that would make it harder to ship biological specimens across the U.S. border.

To reduce illegal trade in endangered species such as parrots and rhinoceros horns, FWS unveiled a proposed rule last fall that would require extensive documentation of every specimen, dead or alive, that enters or leaves the United States. Despite the proposal's good intentions, many scientists complained that it would make it impossible to ship specimens whose species names are unknown and would subject large shipments to import duties (*Science*, 6 January, p. 22).

Now, however, systematists and FWS officials appear to have ironed out their differences.

Nonprofit to Launch Gene-Mapping Effort

The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR), the maverick nonprofit research center, plans to construct—and make publicly available—the first map locating each of the approximately 60,000 genes in the human genome. TIGR Director Craig Venter predicts the map could be completed in 2 or 3 years; he says the effort will start with more than 40,000 unique gene fragments called "expressed sequence tags" (ESTs) already in the public domain.

The map, which will locate genes without revealing their functions, is expected to slash the time it takes to track down disease genes. "If we had had this map [before], we could have reduced from 10 years to 1 year" the time it took to find the gene for Huntington's disease, Venter says.

The public mapping effort should help quell discontent over TIGR's stranglehold on vast amounts of genetic data (*Science*, 14 October 1994, p. 208). TIGR will collaborate with scientists at Perkin-Elmer Corp., the Centre d'Etude du Polymorphisme Hu-

Glaxo Deal May Aid Basic Research

Biomedical researchers may reap big benefits from the pending merger of London-based drug giants Glaxo and Wellcome. The merger, if approved, would boost the value of the Wellcome Trust, a \$7.95 billion research fund for British biomedical scientists derived from shares in the Wellcome Company. "We would expect that the cash generated by the Trust will further increase the funds available for broader research," said the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry in a statement.

main in Paris, and Caltech.

Left out in the cold, apparently, is Human Genome Science Inc. (HGS), the profit-making venture that funds TIGR and maintains 140,000 ESTs in its proprietary database. HGS "declined to be involved in the mapping effort," says Venter. Not so, says HGS President William Haseltine: "We actually offered to be involved ... under a certain set of terms." Even though HGS's proprietary data may not be used, Venter hopes to complete the map with ESTs made public by other researchers.

NIH Grants Office to Undergo Review

Big changes could be coming to the office that rides herd on the roughly 40,000 grant applications that scientists submit each year to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Last week, NIH Director Harold Varmus de-

cided to conduct a broad review of NIH's Division of Research Grants (DRG) in the wake of the announced retirement of its longtime director, Jerome Green.

DRG processes grant applications, assigns them to one of about 100 study sections, staffs those review groups, and main-

tains communication with outside scientists. Institutes make funding decisions. Grist for a review are questions about the relationship between DRG and the institutes in reviewing proposals and the areas covered by study sections, says Wendy Baldwin, associate NIH director for extramural research. "Everything is on the table," she says.

The reason for acting now, according to NIH staffers, is the June retirement of Green, DRG's director since 1986 and a 30-year veteran of NIH's extramural program. Varmus and Deputy NIH Director Ruth Kirschstein last week commissioned a special 12-member panel to conduct the review. Panel chair Marvin Cassman, acting director of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, says he hopes to complete the review by the end of March.

Pentagon, Academy Join Forces on Education

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the Pentagon are about to launch an education project to exploit the talents of former defense workers.

The project traces its origins to a meeting in 1993 between Academy President Bruce Alberts and John Deutch, now deputy secretary of the Department of Defense. The two had little in common: Alberts, a prominent biologist and Washington neophyte, was on a crusade to improve science education in the nation's inner-city schools, while Deutch, a former Massachusetts Institute of Technology provost and physicist with a long record of government service, was eager to find civilian jobs for out-of-work defense researchers.

But the two men found common ground and last month unveiled the fruits of that meeting: A 5-year, \$5 million grant from Defense to NAS to turn laid-off aerospace engineers into science teachers at Los Angeles city middle and high schools.

The new program kicks off next month, when the academy sends out applications for 20 slots in a 1-year program offered by California State University, Long Beach. The former defense scientists will help satisfy a need for qualified science teachers, says program director Maureen Shiflett. If successful, she says, the program will be packaged as a national model. For more info, call Shiflett at (714) 721-2232.