

Accessing the Exelixis collection

To the editor:

Exelixis has decided to make their stock collection available to the academic research community. To that end, ~2,140 stocks have already been transferred to the Bloomington *Drosophila* Stock Center (BDSC) and are ready for distribution. The 519 finished deficiency stocks (described in Parks *et al.*) are ready for distribution by BDSC. An additional ~3500 transposon stocks have also been sent to BDSC by Exelixis and although BDSC will not be responsible for redistributing these lines, they will be used by the public project to drive the isogenic deficiency kit to full coverage.

Because the publicly supported stock centers were not able to take all of the stocks, we entered into an agreement with Exelixis to take some 16,500 stocks into my laboratory at Harvard University. Individual stocks that are not included in the BDSC collection will eventually be distributed in a way that is analogous to the practice established by the stock center. Given the logistics of moving the collection from San Francisco to Boston and the establishment of the collection in its new location, we will not be able to honor requests for strains before 1 October 2004. If

we are ready earlier, an appropriate public announcement will be made.

The logistics of keeping and distributing the stocks will become clear only after we have successfully established the collection in Boston. We estimate that we can keep only two copies of each strain and will be obliged to keep them maximally before changing stocks. At this time, the number of stocks that can be ordered and the number of orders we can handle at a time are not certain. It is our intention to try to satisfy as many people as possible, but we may need to set limits and establish more precise rules regarding distribution if we are overwhelmed with requests. If many people want the same stocks, then these will be distributed on a first come–first served basis. We do not currently have plans to charge anyone for the stocks, but we may have to do so in the future. If we do, we will follow the rules established at BDSC.

At this time, we do not have the means to accommodate individual researchers coming to our facilities to use the collection. It is my hope that we will eventually be able to do just that, but we simply must wait for additional (public or private) funding. Harvard researchers will benefit from the

collection in exchange for contributing substantially to its upkeep.

We are establishing a web page that will provide specific information and instructions for ordering stocks, which we plan to announce in due course on FlyBase and in the Touching Base section of *Nature Genetics*. The e-mail address associated with the collection in Boston is drosophila@hms.harvard.edu. Researchers in commercial or other for-profit research sectors will have to seek a license from Exelixis before acquiring stocks from us.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial and, indeed, the intellectual support of Exelixis in establishing the collection at Harvard and giving us the means to distribute stocks to the fruit fly community.

COMPETING INTERESTS STATEMENT

The author declares competing financial interests (see the *Nature Genetics* website for details).

Spyros Artavanis-Tsakonas

Department Of Cell Biology, Harvard Medical School, MGH Center for Cancer Research, Building 149, 13th Street, Charlestown, Massachusetts 02129, USA.

Published online 22 February 2004;
doi:10.1038/ng1316