

Microbial Culture Collections from Argentina

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Abstract:

Throughout decades, scientific institutions from Argentina were devoted, with a lot of effort, to the preservation “ex situ” of a wide variety of microorganisms. The need to know the situation and the number of them, it has impelled the Subcommittee of Microbial Culture Collections, belonging to the Argentine Microbial Association, to carry out a report of culture collections in Argentina. Up to now, they have recorded 25 centers, of which 15 are registered in the Latin-American and Caribbean Culture Collections Federation (FELACC), 8 in the WFCC, and 3 in both Federations. The Argentine collections include micro-organisms of different origins and applications: biomedical interest (mycelial fungi, yeasts and bacteria) from humans, foods and environment from the Instituto Malbrán; agriculture, industry and food from the universities of Cuyo, Buenos Aires and Comahue; symbiotic bacteria and agriculture development promoting micro-organisms, mycelial fungi and yeasts from the universities of Buenos Aires, Rosario and La Plata; bacteria of veterinary interest from INTA-EEA. Other collections preserved unique taxonomic groups, like lactic bacteria, isolated from different niches as the collection from CERELA. Some centres belonging to CONICET, are dedicated to the conservation of edible or medical fungus or bacteria from rough environment conditions in PROIMI or entomopathogenic fungus at the Universidad de La Plata. Most collections arose as a result of research projects in public universities or official centers, with specific interest in different areas such as agriculture, health, environment, industry and food. Situation of the collections is variable and it depends mostly on institutional funding or from secondary funds derived from research grants, with the exception of those that carry out services to the industry, which work with private entities. There is no specific official financing support. Many have personnel qualified in quality management, but very few apply it. In general, they don't have personal designated exclusively to the maintenance work, which is carried out by investigators, teachers or professionals, as secondary activity. These collections constitute a registration of the microbial biodiversity of our country; they are a potential source of seed, essential for research and biotechnological development in Argentina.

Key words: Argentina, biodiversity, Culture Collection, preservation