IN VITRO CONSERVATION OF GERMPLASM AT CENARGEN.

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Embrapa is the main responsible for the genetic resources in Brazil and this creditability started when Cenargen was created in 1974.In the early eighties, the tissue culture laboratory, then used for quarentine and exchange purposes, was expanded to cover *in vitro* conservation of vegetatively propagated plants. The first acessions to be conserved were cassava originated from CIAT collection and potatoes from CIP. Following, acessions of from field expedictions and from other Brazilian Institutions were included to the collection; land races and wild species of cassava were setup together with other cultivated species. At that time the germplasm collection was established, justifying the built of two conservation chambers, one for temperate (10±2°C) and the other for tropical plants (20±2°C). Today, besides cultivated and wild species of cassava and potato, the collection includes sweet potato, banana, yam, stevia, asparagus, mint, vanilla, pineapple and strawberry, estimating about two thousand accesions. A good success was achieved with the increasingly mastering of cost-effective slow growth techniques. The unit works with a subculturing average replacement of ten months.

Key words: Gene bank, *in vitro* unit, genetic resources