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The beginnings of the library collection date back to 1955 at the Department of Plant Breeding PAS in Poznań at Wojska Polskiego Street. The first records in the inventory come from that year. However, professional organization of the library and a considerable expansion of the collection occurred after 1969, when mgr Włodzimierz Gołąb was appointed its head. In 1971 the collection was transferred together with the entire Department to the newly constructed building at Strzeszyńska Street. At that time professional catalogues were organized, the subscription system was unified and international exchange of journals was developed on a large scale. The catalogue of periodicals, issued in 1972, contained 650 journal titles, of which approx. 150 were received from abroad by exchange.

The basis of the exchange was a journal *Genetica Polonica* (at present *Journal of Applied Genetics*) published by the Institute. It was sent to 140 foreign libraries (e.g. to RSA, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, the USA and almost all European countries). In recent years the exchange has reduced by half due to the increasing postage costs. This year the *Journal of Applied Genetics* is sent within the exchange system to 70 foreign institutions.

In the early 1980's the storage area of the library was considerably expanded and a new, large and multi-function reading room was opened.

At present the library has 35 300 volumes in its collection: 14 840 volumes of books and 20 460 volumes of periodicals. In 2004 a total of 110 titles of foreign journals were received, of which 24 came from subscription, 70 from exchange and 16 were donated. The library has two series of the data bases *Current Contents - Life Science and Agriculture, Biology and Environmental Sciences*, it also has online access to full texts within the data bases of Kluwer, Springer and Elsevier publications.

The library collections are available to the Institute employees and doctoral students, but also to the entire scientific community of the city of Poznań. Each year over three thousand readers use the library, of which several hundred come from outside the Institute.

The library and the reading room are open from Monday to Friday at 8:00 – 3:00 p.m.