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Aside from payment: the experience of acquisition and mutual use of resources in the Belarus Agricultural Library

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Abstract:

In order to provide users with quality information in conjunction with the optimization of financial costs for information resources, libraries try to use the opportunity of free acquisition and to develop active cooperation with other libraries and information centers.

In I.S. Lupinovich Belarus Agricultural Library of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, there is functional system which includes, along with fee-based acquisition, mechanisms for free replenishment of its collection and shared use of documents. Free acquisition of the collection is possible both thanks to acts regulated by the state and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, and through the development of partnerships with other libraries, organizations, and individuals through international exchange of documents, functionality of FAO depository, and gifts and donations. Resource sharing is based on the national and international interlibrary lending, participation in the World Network of Agricultural Libraries, and cooperation agreements with other libraries.

The existing mechanisms contribute to ensuring access of Belarusian users to the world information resources in the field of agriculture, as well as integration of the national sectoral information into the international scientific communication with reduced financial costs.

Keywords: free sources of acquisition, FAO depository, international document exchange, resource sharing, AGLINET, Belarus.

Introduction

The possibility to provide high-quality user access to information for libraries and information centres, as a rule, involves serious funding. In this regard, every library seeks to expand free sources of collection development, as well as to develop mutually beneficial cooperation through resource sharing and document delivery. I.S. Lupinovich Belarus Agricultural Library of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (BelAL) is a national scientific agricultural library with the national repository of agriculture and forestry literature, that performs a function of the national industrial information centre in the field of agrarian sciences and directs its activities to the information support for research and development in the field of agricultural sciences and agro-industrial complex of the country and to providing every resident of Belarus with open access to national and international information resources on agriculture and related industries.

Belarus Agricultural Library provides users with more than 170 thousand documents every year and seeks to satisfy the requests of users as much as possible using its own resources, free access information sources, as well as sharing resources with other national and foreign libraries and information centres (Fig. 1).

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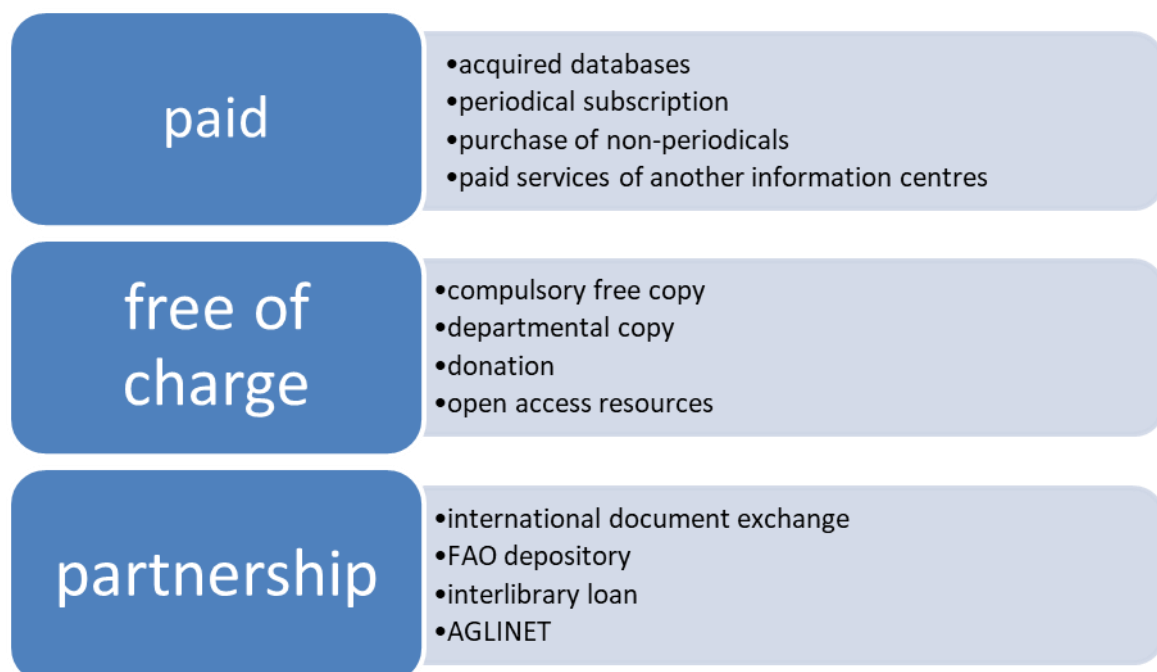


Fig. 1. Ways of acquiring information resources in BelAL

The purpose of this article is to present the existing mechanisms in BelAL that allow to replenish the collection with national and foreign publications free of charge, find information on agricultural science and production in open access (OA) resources, satisfy user requests as much as possible through interlibrary loan and through participation in the World Network of Agricultural Libraries.

Library collection development on a cost-free basis

The library has collected and continues to work at replenishing the most representative Belarusian collection of documents on agriculture and forestry, food industry, natural resources and environmental protection. The BelAL collection contains about 0.5 million of print documents, as well as subscription to international scientific electronic resources, such as full-text, abstract and scientometric databases. Free sources of acquisition take an important place in the collection development of BelAL. Under free sources of acquisition, we understand the sources that do not include payment for a document or for access to information, but may include related expenses (for example, postal services): legal deposit, publications of the Department of Agrarian Sciences of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, international book exchange, publications of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Free acquisition of *national scientific resources* is regulated by regulatory acts of the Republic of Belarus and Bureau of the Department of Agrarian Sciences of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, which includes BelAL. A system of *mandatory free copies of documents* is legally established and successfully functioning in Belarus. These mandatory free copies include copies of various types of documents produced (created, manufactured, issued) in the Republic of Belarus as well as outside its territory by citizens of the Republic of Belarus. The free copies are subject to distribution to the relevant state bodies and organizations according to established order. In accordance with the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, BelAL receives non-periodicals and periodicals in print, electronic publications, combined publications on agro-industrial sector, agriculture, food and processing industries, forestry, natural resources, and ecology with a circulation of 100 copies or more¹. In addition, in accordance with the decision of the Bureau of the Department of Agrarian Sciences of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus of 20 December, 2010, No. 17, the organizations of the Department donate five free copies of their printed publications to BelAL.

Continuous on-line monitoring with the Information System of the State Bibliographic Information of the National Book Chamber of Belarus, allows to most fully track the publication of Belarusian print documents which satisfy to BelAL profile of collection development and to control the timely acquiring of free mandatory and departmental copies of documents to the BelAL collection (Karakulko and Dembovskaya, 2018).

International book exchange has been proved to be economically profitable way of the collection development with *foreign scientific publications* compared to their purchase prices (because financial charges include only mailing costs) (Khrenova, 2015). This type of

¹ On approval of the Regulations on the mandatory free copy of documents and recognition of certain decrees of the Government of the Republic of Belarus: Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of September 3, 2008, no. 1284. Available at: <http://www.pravo.by/document/?guid=3961&p0=C20801284> (accessed 15.06.2019) (in Russian).

cooperation is realized in the form of bilateral agreements on voluntary equivalent exchange of publications. In accordance with the agreement, libraries provide each other with information about scientific publications in the field of agriculture and related branches available in their exchange collections; send each other the requested publications from their exchange collections (postage is covered by the sending organization); inform of receipt of publications². Within the framework of the international book exchange BelAL cooperates actively with 75 organizations from 15 countries (Fig. 2). The main partners are agricultural libraries, research libraries, university libraries, research institutions.

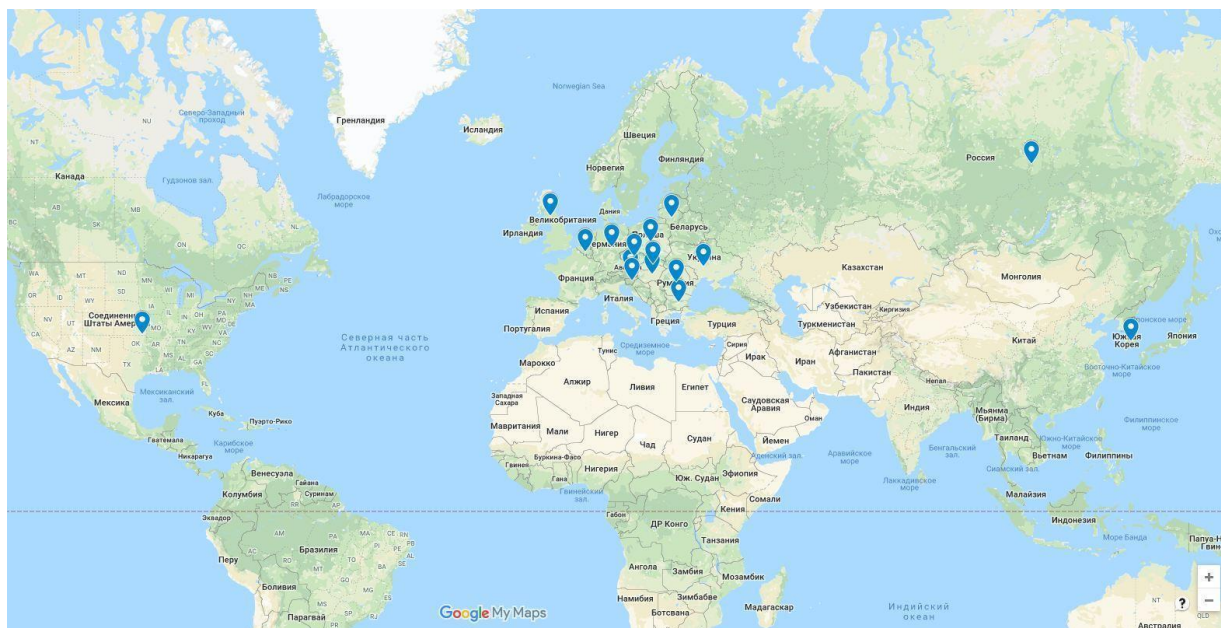


Fig. 2. Partner countries of BelAL on international document exchange

In the process of the equivalent exchange BelAL receives free foreign scientific documents free of charge, paying only shipping cost, it thus is many times cheaper than buying (Dembovskaya and Khalvita, 2018). Moreover, the international exchange of documents makes acquisition of small-circulation foreign publications possible and also contributes to dissemination of Belarusian scientific knowledge through the transfer of national publications to libraries and information centres of many countries.

BelAL has become a repository of documents of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Belarus and receives free FAO documents on food, agriculture and forestry, fisheries, agrarian economy, veterinary medicine, statistics since 2006³. During this time, the library received about 2 thousand FAO publications in various world languages.

Use of OA resources

In addition to the BelAL collection, library staff and users use **sources of open access information** on agriculture and related topics in order to obtain the most complete information. Full-text open access documents can be presented in databases, websites of

2 <http://belal.by/uslugi/dokumentoobmen> (accessed 05.09.2019)

3 <http://www.fao.org/publications/fao-depository-libraries> (accessed 05.09.2019)

publications, open repositories of universities and research organizations, scientific social networks. On the BelAL website some OA Internet resources are grouped into sections for more user-friendly navigation:

- *Databases*⁴: this site section presents an annotated list of available in BelAL databases including open access resources, such as eLIBRARY.RU – an electronic library of scientific publications which provides more than 6,5 thousand full-text electronic versions of Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian and Kazakh scientific journals for public access⁵; AGRIS – the International System for Agricultural Science and Technology providing access to more than 10million biographic records as well as to more than 2 million links to full-text information resources⁶; FAO Document Repository (access to more 68 thousand full-text books, journals, conference papers, technical reports published by the FAO offices)⁷; Core Historical Literature of Agriculture (a full-text collection of landmark agricultural texts published between the early nineteenth century and the middle to late twentieth century in the USA and Western Europe)⁸, etc.
- *Dissertations and Theses*: this site section provides reference information on some resources containing information on dissertations and theses, full texts of dissertations on agriculture and related industries, defended in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Western Europe, the USA, Latin America and Japan, as well as links to these resources⁹.
- *Research and Development Projects*: the section provides information on some significant domestic, foreign and international Internet resources on research and development in agriculture and related industries, provides relevant links to these resources¹⁰.
- *Rare Publications*: this site section provides links to electronic catalogues and full-text digital collections of rare and valuable agricultural publications of the XV – the beginning of the XX centuries of some libraries of Belarus, Russia, Poland and the USA¹¹.

Resource sharing and document delivery

If information requested by users is not available at BelAL and is not available on the Internet, the library staff does search in other libraries and information centres (Babariko-Omelchenko, Muravitskaya and Aksyuto, 2017). BelAL is the national *interlibrary loan* and document delivery center in the field of agriculture and on related topics. In the system of the national interlibrary loan, BelAL most often cooperates with the National Library of Belarus, leading state libraries (Yakub Kolas Central Scientific Library of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Republican Scientific Medical Library, the Republican Scientific and Technical Library, the Presidential Library of the Republic of Belarus), libraries of scientific and practical organizations of the Department of Agrarian Sciences of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the institutions of agricultural education.

The right to deliver documents on agriculture and related industries from international information centres to the library was obtained in 1995 due to joining the World Network of

4 <http://belal.by/resursy/bazy-dannykh> (accessed 05.09.2019)

5 <https://elibrary.ru/defaultx.asp> (accessed 05.09.2019)

6 <http://agris.fao.org/agris-search/index.do> (accessed 05.09.2019)

7 <http://www.fao.org/documents/search> (accessed 05.09.2019)

8 <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/collections/chla> (accessed 05.09.2019)

9 <http://belal.by/resursy/agroweb-navigator-2/informatsiya-o-dissertatsiyakh> (accessed 05.09.2019)

10 <http://belal.by/resursy/agroweb-navigator-2/informatsiya-o-niokr> (accessed 05.09.2019)

11 <http://belal.by/resursy/agroweb-navigator-2/inormatsiya-o-redkikh-izdaniyakh> (accessed 05.09.2019)

Agricultural Libraries – *AGLINET*. During the entire period of participation in the AGLINET project, BelAL has established partnership with more than 40 libraries and information centres. Belarusian scientists thus obtain the necessary information resources from almost any country in the world.

The libraries included in AGLINET, in accordance with the Charter of this organization, are obliged to provide a requested document published in their country, or its copy, as well as any other bibliographic information to partner libraries as soon as possible and, as a rule, free of charge. AGLINET was founded on the basis of the International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists – IAALD in Rome in November, 1971¹². AGLINET has its coordination centre, which has been located at David Lubin FAO Memorial Library in Italy since its organization. Today AGLINET has 68 members from 56 countries¹³.

BelAL has established the closest partnership in AGLINET with the Central Scientific Agricultural Library of Russia. During participation in AGLINET, more than 40% of all documents from abroad were received from this library. It is also worth to mention such a partner as the National Agricultural Library of the USA, which has been cooperating fruitfully with BelAL for 24 years. For more than two decades BelAL has received over 5 thousand documents for Belarusian scientists from this participant.

BelAL also established a system for delivery of Belarusian publications to foreign institutions and patrons, increasing the interest for and authority of Belarusian research. Today more than one thousand documents a year are requested by users not only from neighbouring countries, but also from elsewhere (Belgium, Cuba, Canada, Finland and others). And the number of requests keeps growing every year.

¹² AGLINET Statutes. FAO. Available at: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/library/pdf/Aglinet_statutes.pdf (accessed: 28.08.2019)

¹³ AGLINET: Agricultural Libraries Network. FAO. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/library/library-aglinet/en/> (accessed: 28.08.2019).

Conclusion

The BelAL collection, its information resources and high-quality services are one of the main information access-points to the national agro-industrial complex (Fig. 3).

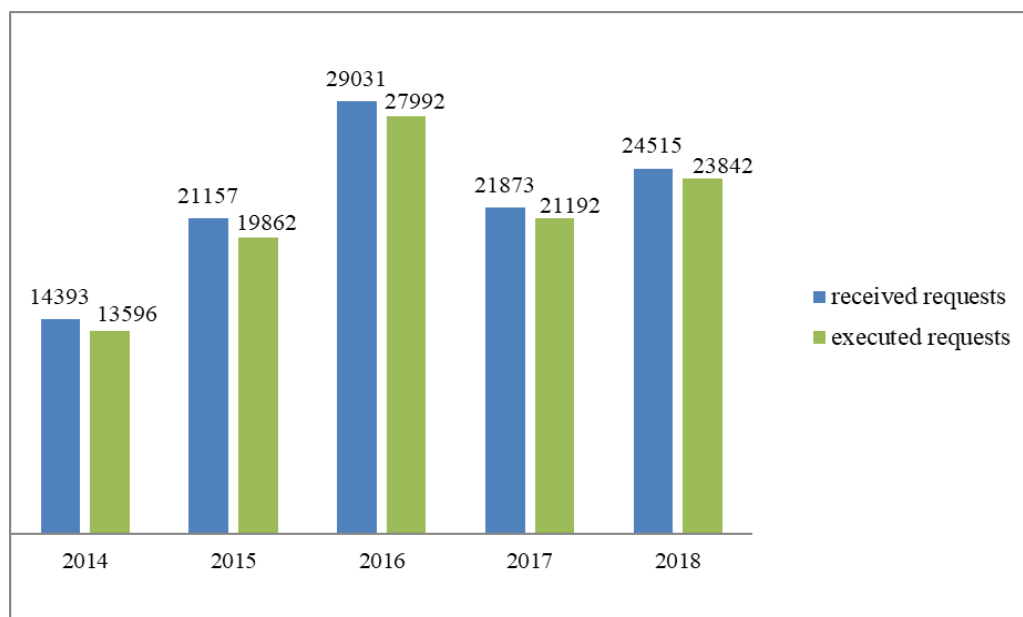


Fig. 3. Efficiency of executing remote user requests for delivery of full-text documents

Reviewed in paper mechanisms for free replenishment of BelAL collection and shared use of documents have several advantages:

- Free mandatory and departmental copies of documents allow the most complete BelAL collection development with national scientific resources;
- International document exchange contributes to replenishment of collection with foreign book publications, which are not always available even for a fee;
- FAO documents provide information on research for sustainable development from around the world;
- OA resources supplement of BelAL collection; and
- Interlibrary loan and resource sharing allow to receive information, which absent in BelAL collection.

In this way free sources of acquisition and partnership development in the field of resource sharing and document delivery contribute to ensuring access for users from Belarus to the world information resources on agriculture and the integration of national industry information into the global information space, reducing financial costs.

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