

**Official Statement to the Press**  
**The American Chestnut Foundation**  
**February 7, 2008**  
**Final Revision**

*Developed by the Science Cabinet and approved by the TACF Board April 2008. This has been developed for TACF representatives to use when contacted by the press or questioned on the distribution or availability of resistance seeds or trees.*

*Please direct any questions on the statement to Dr. Sisco or to Communications Director Meghan Jordan.*

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is breeding chestnut trees for ability to survive the blight disease, which killed almost all our native American chestnut. TACF's goal is to confer on American chestnut the ability to thrive in our nation's woodlands, as it once did. Last fall, TACF began harvesting nuts that it expects will be suitable for planting back into the forest. However, these breeding lines are still in the testing phase and their value needs to be proven on many forest sites until 2015 to 2020.

A gradual increase in seed production is expected over the next few years. These will be distributed to cooperators who are assisting in a formal, rigorous testing program. In addition, seeds that are not needed for this purpose will be distributed principally to members of TACF for informal testing. At the same time, TACF is continuing its breeding program to make further gains in disease resistance and forest competitiveness.

### **Statement to the Press in Q & A Format**

Q. What does The American Chestnut Foundation do?

A. The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is breeding chestnut trees for ability to survive the blight disease, which killed almost all our native American chestnut.

Q. What is the goal of The American Chestnut Foundation?

A. TACF's goal is to confer on American chestnut the ability to thrive in our nation's woodlands, as it once did.

Q. Has TACF harvested any blight-resistant nuts?

A. In the fall of 2007 TACF began harvesting nuts that it expects will be suitable for planting back into the forest.

Q. How soon will you know if the harvested nuts are truly blight-resistant?

A. The breeding lines from which these nuts were grown are still in the testing phase and their value needs to be proven on many forest sites until 2015 to 2020.

Q. Will more of these nuts be available anytime soon?

A. A gradual increase in seed production is expected over the next few years.

Q. Who will get these nuts?

A. These will be distributed to cooperators who are assisting in a formal, rigorous testing program.

Q. If there are any nuts left, will they be available to the general public?

A. Seeds that are not needed for formal, rigorous testing programs will be distributed principally to members of TACF for informal testing.

Q. Does TACF have other goals beyond breeding blight-resistant American chestnut trees?

A. TACF is also continuing its breeding program to make further gains in disease resistance and forest competitiveness