

# Maintaining and Improving Specialty Mushroom Cultures for Mushroom Production

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There are many different ways to maintain stable, productive specialty mushroom cultures over time to achieve consistently good quality and productivity. Some spawn makers come from an academic background; some learn spawn making as a craft. Mushroom farms vary widely, from small family farms in developing countries to large industrialized farms with the newest and most expensive technology available. Whether you view spawn making as an art or as a science, or whether you are supplying a grower who produces pounds of mushrooms a year or tons of mushrooms a week, there is one thing that all culture maintenance programs should have in common. Every culture maintenance program

needs a mechanism to tie stored cultures to actual mushroom production. Every transfer from the original culture to the final transfer to production media holds the potential risk for change. Only by selecting cultures based on good mushroom production is continuous, gradual improvement possible. If change is going to happen, make sure it is change for the better! It is important to have good testing and quality control through every step to ensure that any changes or contaminations that occur do not make it to production. This article reviews some culture storage methods and outlines ways to track cultures through production for culture stability and improvement.