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| International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants |  |

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| Technical Working Party for Agricultural CropsForty-Sixth SessionHanover, Germany, June 19 to 23, 2017Technical Working Party for VegetablesFifty-First SessionRoelofarendsveen, Netherlands, July 3 to 7, 2017 Technical Working Party for Ornamental Plants and Forest TreesFiftieth SessionVictoria, Canada, September 11 to 15, 2017Technical Working Party for Fruit CropsForty-Eighth SessionKelowna, Canada, September 18 to 22, 2017Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer ProgramsThirty-Fifth SessionBuenos Aires, Argentina, November 14 to 17, 2017 | TWP/1/23Original: EnglishDate: June 9, 2017 |

Statistical Methods for Visually Observed Characteristics

Document prepared by the Office of the Union

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

 The purpose of this document is to report on developments concerning “Statistical Methods for Visually Observed Characteristics”.

 The TWPs are invited to note that:

(a) an expert from France will make a report to the TWC, at its thirty-fifth session, on the study to develop software to implement the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland;

(b) the TC, at its fifty-third session, agreed that the appropriate naming and drafting of guidance on the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland should be considered once further experience had been acquired and software was available to facilitate its use in DUS examination; and

(c) China made a presentation at the thirty-fourth session of the TWC to describe the statistical methods used in the DUSTC software package for the analysis of distinctness and uniformity.

 The TWC is invited to consider the report on the study to develop software to implement the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland, to be provided by the expert from France.

 The following abbreviations are used in this document:

 TC: Technical Committee

 TC-EDC: Enlarged Editorial Committee

 TWA: Technical Working Party for Agricultural Crops

 TWC: Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs

 TWF: Technical Working Party for Fruit Crops

 TWO: Technical Working Party for Ornamental Plants and Forest Trees

 TWPs: Technical Working Parties

 TWV: Technical Working Party for Vegetables

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# BACKGROUND

 The recent background to this matter is provided in documents TWC/34/18, TWO/48/20, TWV/49/20, TWA/45/23 and TWF/46/20 and TC/52/24 “Statistical Methods for Visually Observed Characteristics”. “Molecular Techniques”.

# DEVELOPMENTS at the technical working parties IN 2016

 At their sessions in 2016, the TWC and TWA considered documents TWC/34/18 and TWA/45/23 “Statistical Methods for Visually Observed Characteristics”, respectively.

 The TWC and TWA noted that the expert from France would make a report to the TWC, at its thirty‑fifth session, to be held in 2017, on the study to develop software to implement the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland (see documents TWC/34/32 “Report”, paragraph 87 and TWA/45/25 “Report”, paragraph 74).

 The TWC agreed and the TWA noted that appropriate naming and drafting guidance on the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland should be considered once further experience had been acquired and software was available to facilitate its use in DUS examination (see documents TWC/34/32 “Report”, paragraph 88 and TWA/45/25 “Report”, paragraph 73).

 The TWA noted that China had made a presentation at the thirty-fourth session of the TWC to describe the statistical methods used in the DUSTC software package for the analysis of distinctness and uniformity (see document TWA/45/25 “Report”, paragraph 72).

# DEVELOPMENTS at the technical committee IN 2017

 The TC, at its fifty-third session, noted that an expert from France would make a report to the TWC, at its thirty-fifth session, to be held in 2017, on the study to develop software to implement the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland (see document TC/52/31 “Report”, paragraphs 194 to 196).

 The TC agreed that the appropriate naming and drafting of guidance on the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland should be considered once further experience had been acquired and software was available to facilitate its use in DUS examination.

 The TC noted that China had made a presentation at the thirty-fourth session of the TWC to describe the statistical methods used in the DUSTC software package for the analysis of distinctness and uniformity.

 The TWPs are invited to note that:

 (a) an expert from France will make a report to the TWC, at its thirty-fifth session, on the study to develop software to implement the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland;

 (b) the TC, at its fifty-third session, agreed that the appropriate naming and drafting of guidance on the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland should be considered once further experience had been acquired and software was available to facilitate its use in DUS examination; and

 (c) China made a presentation at the thirty-fourth session of the TWC to describe the statistical methods used in the DUSTC software package for the analysis of distinctness and uniformity.

 The TWC is invited to consider the report of the progress of development of the new method of calculation of COYU, to be provided by the expert from the United Kingdom.

[Annex follows]

NEW STATISTICAL METHOD FOR VISUALLY OBSERVED CHARACTERISTICS
WITH MULTINOMIAL DISTRIBUTED DATA

I. ORDINAL CHARACTERISTICS

Summary of requirements for application of the method

* + The method is appropriate to use for assessing distinctness of varieties where:
	+ The characteristic is ordinal and recorded for individual plants (usually recorded visually)
	+ There are some differences between plants
	+ The observations are made over at least two years or growing cycles on a single location
	+ There should be at least 20 degrees of freedom for estimating the random variety-by-year interaction term.
	+ The distribution of the characteristic should be unimodal, i.e. notes with large number of plants should occur next to each other, zeros at one or both ends of the scale should not cause problems as long as most varieties have plants that fall in different notes
	+ The total number of plants for each variety should not be too low, at least 5 times the number of notes the variety covers

Summary

The method can be considered as an alternative to the χ2-test for independence in a contingency table. The χ2-test only takes the variation caused by random sampling into account and may thus be too liberal if additional sources of variation are present. Also the χ2-test does not take the ordering of the notes into account. The combined over-years method for ordinal characteristics takes other sources of variation into account by including a random variety-by-year interaction term (as for the COYD method described in TGP/8/1 Part II: 3).It takes the ordering of notes into account by using a cumulative function over the ordered notes. The inclusion of the random effect is expected to decrease the number of distinct pairs of varieties compared to the χ2-test for independence, but to better ensure that the decisions are consistent over coming years. Taking the ordering of notes into account is expected to increase the power of the test and thus to increase the number of distinct pairs.

The method is based on a generalisation of the traditional analyses of variance and regression methods for normally distributed data, which are called “generalized linear mixed models”. A general description of the method may be found in Agresti (2002) and a more specific description – using other examples of data may be found in Kristensen (2011).

The combined over-years method for ordinal characteristics involves

* Calculating the number of plants for each note for each variety in each of the two or three years of trials, which results in a 3-way table (see the example)
* Analyse the data using appropriate software
* Compare each candidate to the reference varieties and the other candidates at the appropriate level of significance to see which varieties the candidate is distinct from
* Check if the variety-by-year interaction term for distinct pairs is considerably larger than the average for all variety pairs

Example

For demonstration a subset of varieties from a DUS experiment with Meadow fescue (*Festuca pratensis*) in Finland was chosen. The notes for Plant: growth habit at inflorescence emergence (Characteristic 9 of TG/39/8) in 2010, 2011 and 2012 were analysed (Table 4). In most cases 40-60 plants were recorded in each year. This characteristic is rather sensitive to the growing conditions. This is apparent from table 4 where it is seen that the note 1 was recorded only in 2012 while note 7 was recorded only in 2010. Also it is seen that the most common note (over all varieties) in the three years was note, 5, 3 and 3, respectively in 2010, 2011 and 2012. The applied analysis method takes this into account by calculating an additive effect of each year (as for the COYD method for normal distributed data).

The estimated percent of plants in each note for each variety are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Number of individual plants with each note for each variety and year for the characteristic Plant: growth habit at inflorescence emergence in Meadow fescue *(Festuca pratensis)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Variety | Note |
| 1 | 2  | 3 | 4  | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
| A | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 20 | 4 | 27 | 23 | 1 | 23 | 5 | 32 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 12 | 21 | 9 | 5 | 11 | 29 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 24 | 3 | 21 | 21 | 1 | 21 | 7 | 30 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| D | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 17 | 7 | 35 | 23 | 6 | 11 | 14 | 31 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 22 | 9 | 30 | 28 | 13 | 12 | 6 | 31 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| F | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 0 | 13 | 14 | 6 | 22 | 15 | 27 | 14 | 18 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| G | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 29 | 8 | 34 | 25 | 10 | 18 | 4 | 25 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 28 | 7 | 48 | 21 | 19 | 6 | 4 | 19 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 20 | 5 | 29 | 21 | 6 | 23 | 8 | 29 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| J | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 1 | 35 | 27 | 0 | 16 | 12 | 35 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| K | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 2 | 24 | 14 | 4 | 17 | 13 | 29 | 17 | 13 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| L | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 20 | 4 | 34 | 26 | 7 | 17 | 8 | 28 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| M | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 5 | 24 | 22 | 7 | 27 | 13 | 30 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| N | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 3 | 18 | 24 | 2 | 15 | 9 | 25 | 16 | 14 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| O | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 19 | 9 | 39 | 29 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 23 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| P | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 9 | 23 | 13 | 30 | 32 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 24 | 9 | 27 | 24 | 10 | 19 | 8 | 28 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| R | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 24 | 2 | 30 | 26 | 6 | 21 | 6 | 35 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| S | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 16 | 6 | 25 | 27 | 14 | 19 | 11 | 26 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 19 | 3 | 36 | 24 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| U | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 17 | 11 | 41 | 31 | 15 | 11 | 8 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| V | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 15 | 32 | 11 | 33 | 18 | 13 | 6 | 5 | 30 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| W | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 22 | 4 | 28 | 30 | 6 | 16 | 6 | 37 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| X | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 19 | 2 | 24 | 17 | 4 | 17 | 15 | 40 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Y | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 12 | 2 | 8 | 24 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 24 | 0 | 13 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Z | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 25 | 17 | 2 | 16 | 15 | 26 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 24 | 5 | 38 | 24 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 34 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 20 | 5 | 29 | 26 | 5 | 16 | 11 | 37 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 24 | 7 | 28 | 27 | 8 | 12 | 4 | 30 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 17 | 7 | 31 | 28 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 30 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 14 | 1 | 24 | 26 | 9 | 22 | 16 | 36 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Table 2. Estimated percent of plants for each note of each variety

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Variety | Note |
| 1 erect | 2 erect – semi erect | 3 semi erect | 4 semi erect – intermediate | 5 intermediate | 6 intermediate – semi prostrate | 7 semi prostate |
| A | 0.2 | 5.7 | 34.8 | 33.7 | 24.5 | 1.1 | 0.1 |
| B | 0.2 | 5.9 | 35.4 | 33.5 | 23.9 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| C | 0.1 | 4.8 | 31.2 | 34.4 | 28.1 | 1.3 | 0.1 |
| D | 0.2 | 8.2 | 41.8 | 30.8 | 18.2 | 0.7 | 0.0 |
| E | 0.4 | 12.4 | 48.7 | 25.7 | 12.4 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| F | 0.0 | 1.7 | 14.6 | 28.9 | 51.0 | 3.6 | 0.2 |
| G | 0.3 | 10.3 | 45.8 | 28.2 | 14.9 | 0.6 | 0.0 |
| H | 0.6 | 17.0 | 52.3 | 20.9 | 8.9 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| I | 0.2 | 5.6 | 34.1 | 33.9 | 25.1 | 1.1 | 0.1 |
| J | 0.1 | 4.3 | 29.2 | 34.6 | 30.3 | 1.4 | 0.1 |
| K | 0.1 | 2.5 | 19.6 | 32.5 | 42.8 | 2.5 | 0.1 |
| L | 0.2 | 7.8 | 40.8 | 31.4 | 19.1 | 0.8 | 0.0 |
| M | 0.1 | 4.6 | 30.2 | 34.5 | 29.1 | 1.3 | 0.1 |
| N | 0.1 | 2.2 | 18.1 | 31.6 | 45.1 | 2.8 | 0.1 |
| O | 0.3 | 10.1 | 45.5 | 28.4 | 15.1 | 0.6 | 0.0 |
| P | 0.5 | 16.0 | 51.8 | 21.8 | 9.5 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| Q | 0.3 | 8.8 | 43.1 | 30.0 | 17.1 | 0.7 | 0.0 |
| R | 0.2 | 6.7 | 37.8 | 32.7 | 21.7 | 0.9 | 0.0 |
| S | 0.2 | 7.0 | 38.8 | 32.3 | 20.8 | 0.8 | 0.0 |
| T | 0.2 | 7.9 | 41.0 | 31.2 | 18.8 | 0.7 | 0.0 |
| U | 0.4 | 12.1 | 48.4 | 25.9 | 12.7 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| V | 0.5 | 16.5 | 52.1 | 21.4 | 9.2 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| W | 0.2 | 7.1 | 38.9 | 32.2 | 20.7 | 0.8 | 0.0 |
| X | 0.1 | 5.2 | 32.6 | 34.2 | 26.6 | 1.2 | 0.1 |
| Y | 0.1 | 4.4 | 29.7 | 34.6 | 29.7 | 1.4 | 0.1 |
| Z | 0.1 | 2.7 | 21.3 | 33.3 | 40.3 | 2.2 | 0.1 |
| 1 | 0.3 | 10.6 | 46.2 | 27.8 | 14.5 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| 2 | 0.2 | 6.7 | 37.8 | 32.7 | 21.7 | 0.9 | 0.0 |
| 3 | 0.4 | 12.6 | 49.0 | 25.4 | 12.2 | 0.4 | 0.0 |
| 4 | 0.3 | 9.3 | 44.1 | 29.4 | 16.3 | 0.6 | 0.0 |
| 5 | 0.1 | 4.4 | 29.7 | 34.6 | 29.7 | 1.4 | 0.1 |

The candidates were variety *A* and *B* and the remaining varieties *C, D,…, 5* were reference varieties, a measure of the differences and the P-values for testing the hypothesis of no difference between candidate and reference varieties were calculated. The differences and the *P*-values are shown in Table 6. An *F3*-value is calculated in a similar way as for COY-D for normally distributed characteristics and is used in order to ensure that the pair did not became distinct because of a very large difference in only of the years without being different in other years (TGP/8/1 Draft 13 Section 3.6.3). Therefore, a significant difference between two varieties with a high *F3*-value should be examined carefully before the final decision is taken. The *F3*‑values and their significances are also shown in Table 6.

For the data shown here candidate *A* could be separated from 11 of the reference varieties when using a 1% level of significance while candidate B could be separated form 10 of the reference varieties. The two candidates could not be separated from each other. The largest *F3-value,* 5.43, was found for variety pair *B-S* (the approximate threshold for the *F4* values to be significant is 4.98). This means that the interaction for this pair should have been considered if this pair had been distinct on this characteristic.

Table 3. Differences and F3 values together with P-values for relevant pairs of varieties

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Variety | Candidate A | Candidate B |
|  | Difference | PDifference | F3 | PF3 | Difference | PDifference | F3 | PF3 |
| A | - | - | - | - | 0.03 | 0.9011 | 0.22 | 0.4051 |
| B | -0.03 | 0.9011 | 0.21 | 0.6566 | - | - | - | - |
| C | 0.19 | 0.4507 | 0.02 | 0.8782 | 0.22 | 0.4051 | 0.09 | 0.7694 |
| D | -0.39 | 0.1243 | 0.04 | 0.8522 | -0.35 | 0.1856 | 0.07 | 0.7947 |
| E | -0.84 | 0.0011 | 0.73 | 0.4154 | -0.81 | 0.0030 | 1.73 | 0.2215 |
| F | 1.26 | <.0001 | 0.56 | 0.4743 | 1.29 | <.0001 | 1.46 | 0.2584 |
| G | -0.63 | 0.0125 | 1.66 | 0.2298 | -0.60 | 0.0255 | 3.06 | 0.1144 |
| H | -1.22 | <.0001 | 1.17 | 0.3080 | -1.19 | <.0001 | 2.37 | 0.1579 |
| I | 0.03 | 0.8922 | 0.29 | 0.6041 | 0.07 | 0.8004 | 0.99 | 0.3448 |
| J | 0.30 | 0.2267 | 1.13 | 0.3146 | 0.34 | 0.2081 | 0.37 | 0.5600 |
| K | 0.88 | 0.0007 | 0.00 | 0.9669 | 0.91 | 0.0010 | 0.25 | 0.6274 |
| L | -0.33 | 0.1879 | 0.52 | 0.4895 | -0.30 | 0.2651 | 1.39 | 0.2681 |
| M | 0.24 | 0.3255 | 0.82 | 0.3878 | 0.28 | 0.2949 | 1.87 | 0.2047 |
| N | 0.99 | 0.0002 | 0.00 | 0.9734 | 1.02 | 0.0003 | 0.18 | 0.6805 |
| O | -0.61 | 0.0162 | 0.27 | 0.6151 | -0.58 | 0.0317 | 0.96 | 0.3525 |
| P | -1.15 | <.0001 | 0.24 | 0.6350 | -1.11 | 0.0001 | 0.90 | 0.3664 |
| Q | -0.47 | 0.0630 | 2.59 | 0.1421 | -0.43 | 0.1039 | 4.28 | 0.0685 |
| R | -0.17 | 0.5056 | 0.06 | 0.8115 | -0.13 | 0.6174 | 0.50 | 0.4984 |
| S | -0.22 | 0.3813 | 3.50 | 0.0943 | -0.18 | 0.4858 | 5.43 | 0.0448 |
| T | -0.34 | 0.1848 | 0.82 | 0.3879 | -0.31 | 0.2578 | 0.20 | 0.6650 |
| U | -0.82 | 0.0013 | 1.04 | 0.3352 | -0.79 | 0.0035 | 2.18 | 0.1735 |
| V | -1.18 | <.0001 | 0.03 | 0.8674 | -1.15 | <.0001 | 0.08 | 0.7799 |
| W | -0.23 | 0.3621 | 0.17 | 0.6870 | -0.19 | 0.4653 | 0.00 | 0.9662 |
| X | 0.12 | 0.6441 | 0.00 | 0.9863 | 0.15 | 0.5764 | 0.23 | 0.6444 |
| Y | 0.27 | 0.3246 | 0.19 | 0.6753 | 0.30 | 0.2936 | 0.00 | 0.9791 |
| Z | 0.77 | 0.0032 | 0.64 | 0.4435 | 0.80 | 0.0038 | 0.12 | 0.7404 |
| 1 | -0.66 | 0.0093 | 0.00 | 0.9861 | -0.63 | 0.0196 | 0.23 | 0.6443 |
| 2 | -0.17 | 0.5049 | 0.15 | 0.7116 | -0.13 | 0.6165 | 0.71 | 0.4219 |
| 3 | -0.87 | 0.0009 | 0.07 | 0.8017 | -0.83 | 0.0026 | 0.52 | 0.4907 |
| 4 | -0.53 | 0.0393 | 0.03 | 0.8714 | -0.49 | 0.0684 | 0.09 | 0.7760 |
| 5 | 0.27 | 0.2712 | 0.31 | 0.5938 | 0.31 | 0.2471 | 1.03 | 0.3376 |

In order to examine whether one or more varieties have a different variety by year interaction than the main part of the varieties, the actual contribution to the interaction was calculated for each variety and compared to the average contribution from all varieties. This was done using an *F*- value, *F4.*

The *F4* values for each variety in the analysis are shown in Figure 2. The largest *F4-*value*,* 2.78, was found for variety *S* (the approximate threshold for the *F4-*values to be significant is 4.98)*.* This value was not significantly larger than 1. The *F4*-value is calculated as the quotients between the each varieties contribution to the overall interaction and the average interaction over all varieties. As the contribution for the actual variety enters in both the numerator and denominator of the *F4*-valuethis test is approximate.

 It is also seen that some varieties, e.g. *I, K, N, X, 1, 2, 3* and *5* have a very low interaction with year indicating that their response to year is very close to the mean reaction for all varieties.

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| --- |
|  |
| **Figure 1. *F4*-values for each variety’s contribution to the interaction for ordinal characteristic growth habit**  |

II. NOMINAL CHARACTERISTICS

Summary of requirements for application of the method

The method is appropriate to use for assessing distinctness of varieties where:

* The characteristic is nominal and recorded for individual plants (usually recorded visually)
* There are some differences between plants
* The observations are made over at least two years or growing cycles on a single location
* There should be at least 20 degrees of freedom for estimating the random variety-by-year interaction term.
* The expected number of plants for each combination of variety and note should be at least one – and for most of the combinations the number should be at least 5.

Summary

The method can be considered as an alternative to the χ2-test for independence in a contingency table. The χ2-test only takes the variation caused by random sampling into account and may thus be too liberal if additional sources of variation are present. The combined over-years method for nominal characteristics takes other sources of variation into account by including a random variety-by-year interaction term (as for the COYD method described in TGP/8/1 Part II: 3). The inclusion of the random effect is expected to decrease the number of distinct pairs of varieties compared to the χ2-test for independence, but to better ensure that the decisions are consistent over coming years. The method is based on a generalisation of the traditional analyses of variance and regression methods for normally distributed data, which are called “generalized linear mixed models”. A detailed description of the method – using other examples of data may be found in Agresti (2002) or Kristensen (2011).

The combined over-years method for nominal characteristics involves

* Calculating the number of plants for each note for each variety in each of the two or three years of trials, which results in a 3-way table (see the example)
* Analyse the data using appropriate software
* Compare each candidate to the reference varieties and the other candidates at the appropriate level of significance to see which varieties the candidate is distinct from
* Check if the variety-by-year interaction term for distinct pairs is considerably larger than the average for all variety pairs

Example

No example shown at present.

III. BINOMIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Summary of requirements for application of the method

The method is appropriate to use for assessing distinctness of varieties where:

* The characteristic is recorded for individual plants (usually recorded visually) using a scale with only 2 levels (such as present/absent or similar)
* There are some differences between plants
* The observations are made over at least two years or growing cycles on a single location
* There should be at least 20 degrees of freedom for estimating the random variety-by-year interaction term.
* The expected number of plants for each combination of variety and note should be at least one – and for most of the combinations the number should be at least 5.

Summary

The method can be considered as an alternative to the χ2-test for independence in a contingency table. The χ2-test only takes the variation caused by random sampling into account and may thus be too liberal if additional sources of variation are present. The combined over-years method for binomial characteristics take other sources of variation into account by including a random variety-by-year interaction term (as for the COYD method described in TGP/8/1 Part II: 3). The inclusion of the random effect is expected to decrease the number of distinct pairs of varieties compared to the χ2-test for independence, but to better ensure that the decisions are consistent over coming years.

The method is based on generalisation of the traditional analyses of variance and regression methods for normally distributed data, which are called “generalized linear mixed models”.

The combined over-years method for binomial characteristics involves

* Calculating the number of plants for each note for each variety in each of the two or three years of trials, which results in a 3-way table
* Analyse the data using appropriate software
* Compare each candidate to the reference varieties and the other candidates at the appropriate level of significance to see which varieties the candidate is distinct from
* Check if the variety-by-year interaction term for distinct pairs is considerably larger than the average for all variety pairs

Example

The proportion of plants with cyanid glucoside (Characteristic 4 in TG/38/7) was measured for some white clover varieties in Northern Ireland in each of 3 years. The variable was recorded as absent or present. In this example only 20 varieties are used and variety 1 and 2 are considered as candidates, while the remaining varieties are considered as references. The data are shown in Table 7.

**Table 4. Number of plants without and with cyanid glucoside in 20 white clover varieties in each of 3 years**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| Variety | Absent | Present | Absent | Present | Absent | Present |
| 1 | 31 | 29 | 22 | 38 | 17 | 43 |
| 2 | 40 | 20 | 42 | 18 | 41 | 19 |
| 3 | 50 | 10 | 52 | 8 | 55 | 5 |
| 4 | 42 | 18 | 40 | 20 | 34 | 26 |
| 5 | 37 | 23 | 42 | 18 | 37 | 23 |
| 6 | 51 | 9 | 49 | 11 | 52 | 8 |
| 7 | 30 | 30 | 25 | 35 | 26 | 34 |
| 8 | 37 | 23 | 31 | 29 | 30 | 30 |
| 9 | 27 | 33 | 27 | 33 | 25 | 35 |
| 10 | 48 | 12 | 47 | 13 | 43 | 17 |
| 11 | 40 | 20 | 40 | 20 | 32 | 28 |
| 12 | 18 | 42 | 13 | 47 | 12 | 48 |
| 13 | 10 | 50 | 12 | 48 | 5 | 55 |
| 14 | 41 | 19 | 46 | 14 | 45 | 15 |
| 15 | 58 | 2 | 55 | 5 | 58 | 2 |
| 16 | 7 | 53 | 10 | 50 | 11 | 49 |
| 17 | 25 | 35 | 22 | 38 | 20 | 40 |
| 18 | 48 | 12 | 54 | 6 | 52 | 8 |
| 19 | 20 | 40 | 20 | 40 | 23 | 37 |
| 20 | 57 | 3 | 54 | 6 | 55 | 5 |

The analysis showed that for these data there was no interaction between variety and year, which means that the variance component for year by variety was estimated to be zero and thus all variation in the data could be explained by sampling variation. The F-test for comparing the varieties was 36.67 with a P-value less than 0.01%, so there were clearly some differences among the varieties.

More specifically the analysis showed that candidate variety 1 was significantly different from 12 of the reference varieties at the 1% level (Table 8) whereas candidate variety 2 was significantly different from 11 of the reference varieties. Also the two candidate varieties were significantly different at the 1% level (Table 8).

As there was no interaction between variety and year, all *F3* and *F4* values are estimated to be zero for these data. Therefore, they are not shown here.**Table 5. Estimated percent of plants with cyanid glucoside for each variety and comparison of each variety with the candidate varieties 1 and 2 using F-tests**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimated percent | Candidate 1 | Candidate 2 |
| Variety | F | P | F | P |
| 1 | 61.1 |  |  | 30.45 | <.0001 |
| 2 | 31.6 | 30.45 | <.0001 |  |  |
| 3 | 12.7 | 77.01 | <.0001 | 17.58 | 0.0002 |
| 4 | 35.5 | 23.05 | <.0001 | 0.61 | 0.4395 |
| 5 | 35.5 | 23.05 | <.0001 | 0.61 | 0.4395 |
| 6 | 15.5 | 70.09 | <.0001 | 12.54 | 0.0011 |
| 7 | 55.0 | 1.38 | 0.2473 | 19.58 | <.0001 |
| 8 | 45.5 | 8.69 | 0.0054 | 7.27 | 0.0104 |
| 9 | 56.1 | 0.93 | 0.3414 | 21.39 | <.0001 |
| 10 | 23.3 | 49.59 | <.0001 | 3.12 | 0.0853 |
| 11 | 37.8 | 19.27 | <.0001 | 1.48 | 0.2309 |
| 12 | 76.1 | 9.28 | 0.0042 | 66.21 | <.0001 |
| 13 | 85.0 | 24.61 | <.0001 | 90.68 | <.0001 |
| 14 | 26.6 | 41.43 | <.0001 | 1.09 | 0.3034 |
| 15 | 5.0 | 82.34 | <.0001 | 33.21 | <.0001 |
| 16 | 84.5 | 23.44 | <.0001 | 89.25 | <.0001 |
| 17 | 62.8 | 0.11 | 0.7463 | 33.81 | <.0001 |
| 18 | 14.4 | 72.95 | <.0001 | 14.45 | 0.0005 |
| 19 | 65.0 | 0.58 | 0.4492 | 38.53 | <.0001 |
| 20 | 7.8 | 84.99 | <.0001 | 28.18 | <.0001 |

IV. COMMON TO ALL THREE METHODS

Software

The procedure *GLIMMIX* of *SAS* (SAS Institute Inc., 2010) can be used to estimate the parameters of the generalised linear mixed model, and the data-step facilities (and/or the procedure *IML*) of the same package can be used for the remaining calculations. However, similar facilities may be found in other statistical packages, thus the *glmer*() function of the package *lme4* of R can do the binomial analysis provided that there are more than one observation for each combination of variety and year.

Final note

In the case where there are only two notes, the methods for nominal and ordinal scaled characteristics both become identical as they reduce to the same binomial method: meaning that both methods can be applied to binomially distributed data.

References and literature

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