

**UPOV**

***THE GRASS, THE MERCHANDISE,  
THE SNACK IN YOUR HAND.***

Behind every sporting moment, there's a new plant variety someone spent years developing.

For IP and Sports, we're celebrating the plant breeders and farmers behind the game.

***#WORLDIPDAY***

***IP AND SPORTS: READY, SET, INNOVATE!***



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# THE PITCH

**The most micromanaged grass in the world is playing the World Cup.**

For the 2026 FIFA World Cup, FIFA required natural turf in all 16 stadiums, including indoor arenas that don't see sunlight. Universities spent years testing hundreds of grass varieties to find ones that could survive 104 matches across three countries and wildly different climates.

That research doesn't happen without plant variety protection. Breeders invest decades developing varieties with the wear tolerance, recovery speed, and consistency that elite sport demands.

Plant variety protection builds trusts among key stakeholders and enables the investment needed to create impact.





# THE MERCHANDISE

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**That fan jersey? It started in a field.**

The shirt on a fan's back, the training wear in the dressing room, the merchandise sold in stadiums worldwide - much of it starts in a cotton field. New cotton varieties have been developed for fibre length, strength, and yield, helping manufacturers clothe the global sports industry from the ground up.

Professional match jerseys have moved to synthetics, but cotton remains the backbone of the enormous fan and merchandise market that surrounds every major tournament. Plant variety protection supports the breeders keeping those supply chains resilient, efficient, and ready for global demand.

The innovation starts long before kick-off.

# THE FOOD

**100,000 fans. One stadium. A lot of food.**

Every major sporting event is also an enormous agricultural operation. The wheat in the hotdog bun, the potato in the fries, the tomato in the sauce, each of these is a variety that a breeder spent years developing for flavour, higher protein content and shelf life.

Protected varieties mean breeders can recover their investment and keep innovating. Better varieties mean more reliable harvests, more consistent quality, and more food on the table - whether that table is in a stadium or a family kitchen.

The food chain feeding global sport runs on plant innovation.



# THE BALL

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The ball in play. The variety behind it.

Almost every major sport involves a ball, and many rely on natural rubber, from the bladders inside footballs and basketballs to the core of a tennis ball.

The Rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*) breeding has focused for decades on disease resistance and performance, and varieties are protected in several UPOV members.

No rubber breeding, no bounce.





# ***READY, SET, INNOVATE!***

**UPOV**

UPOV celebrates the breeders, farmers and growers whose work show up in the grass under a player's feet, the cotton against their skin, and the food in a fan's hands.

Plant variety protection gives breeders the same thing that patents give engineers and copyright gives artists: a fair return on innovation, and a reason to keep going.