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Seminar on DUS Testing
Geneva, 18-20 March 2010

Session 5: Guidance for DUS Testing

DUS testing in absence of UPOV Test Guidelines

Experience in Australia

PVP = PBR

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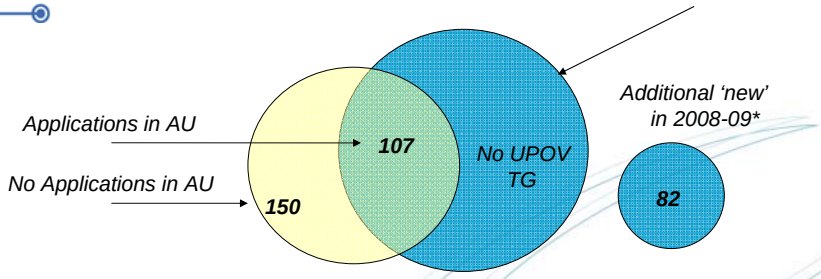
Is DUS testing in the absence of TGs likely ?

UPOV TGs = 257

Total genera applied for in AU = 415



* Recent census estimates >19,000 species endemic to Australia

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Steps in the application and DUS testing process

AU's PVP application form requires the applicant to describe the relative differences between the candidate variety and the most similar VCK (or where the candidate is the first of the species from its parental/source material) – key characteristic(s) are identified

- Use UPOV TG if one already exists
- Check UPOV draft/proj. for potential suitability
  - if so, contact lead drafter
- Otherwise….
  - Check GENIE for list of countries with practical experience
    If one is available, request copy of testing protocol and descriptor and use as the basis for establishing and developing a 'national descriptor'.

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Developing national descriptors (1/2)

In AU, a national descriptor is created by co-operation between the Qualified Person (QP) and the PBR Examiner

- the breeder and/or other experts (incl. other Authorities) may also be involved

- drafts reviewed and approved within the PBR office

Procedure follows the same general process as for drafting UPOV TGs (albeit without involvement of the UPOV'sTWPs etc)

- subject to need, priorities and UPOV work plan, a national descriptor could form the starting point for discussion for TWP consideration

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Developing national descriptors (2/2)

- Research the genus/species to identify relevant characteristics, variability and possible existing VCK
- If available, a protocol/descriptor from another Authority is used either unchanged or modified to suit
- Alternative 1, use existing Test Guidelines or national descriptors for similar or related species are used as the starting point
  - in some cases it is possible to use these without much modification
  - in other cases they are adapted by the addition/deletion/modification of characteristics and states of expression, example varieties etc
  - uniformity & stability standards for similar species are considered
- Alternative 2: Where no other information available, drafting starts on basis of a 'general descriptor' (one for monocotyledons; one for dicotyledons)

Principle: Follow TGP/7 where ever possible

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Cooperation with preparing Test Guidelines & Descriptors

- Breeders often have the best collections
  - *sometimes the only collections*
  - *provide access to material*
  - *often aware of existing VCKs*
- Often DUS or other trials are also being conducted
  - *PBR Examiner and QP can gather additional information to finalise descriptor with minimal additional cost*

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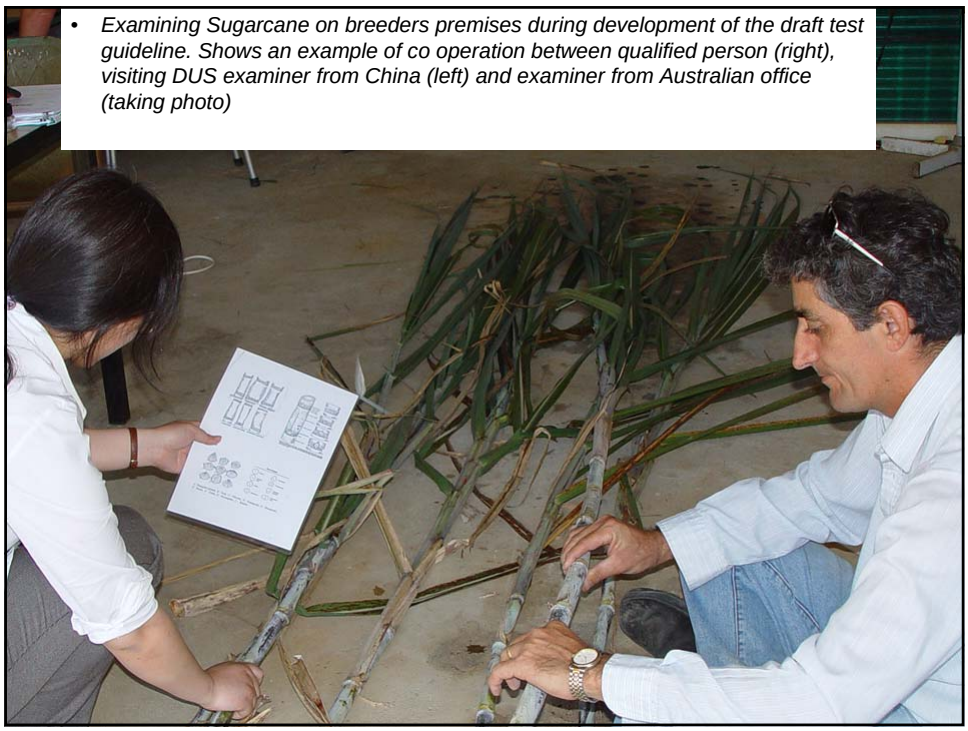
- *Examining Sugarcane on breeders premises during development of the draft test guideline. Shows an example of co operation between qualified person (right), visiting DUS examiner from China (left) and examiner from Australian office (taking photo)*



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Knowledge and Skills

- PBR Examiner experienced in harmonization with UPOV principles
  - *but may not be familiar with the species*
- QP has botanical experience for that particular species
  - *basis of their accreditation*
- Breeder has knowledge of VCK and sourcing of material
- Other experts are often consulted
  - eg ACRA, universities, researchers, collectors, societies

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Example of inputs from other resources

Australian Cultivar Registration Authority (ACRA)
for Australian native species

- maintains a register of Australian native plants and their hybrids
- records cultivar names in accordance with ICNCP
- assesses and provides botanical description of cultivars and is involved in maintaining herbarium specimens, photographic collections
- publishes information on Australian plant cultivars

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DUS Trial

- The draft descriptor is used to establish a DUS trial which includes the most similar VCKs identified
- Often the number of existing varieties is very limited and it is not possible to prepare a comprehensive descriptor that covers the full range of potential states of expression
  - if this is the case, states of expression towards the extremes (eg QN notes1 and 2 etc) are avoided
  - commonly, QN characteristics are supported with statistics
- In some circumstances, the existing parent and the candidate variety are the only known forms for the species. Until further varieties are developed, only an objective description of relative differences between the varieties in the trial is possible without providing a full range of states of expression in the descriptor (see TGP/13).
  - DUS can be established
  - Harmonised descriptions limited to a narrow range of variation

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Summary

DUS testing in absence of approved UPOV TG is common and will continue to grow
- there will never be enough UPOV TGs

AU uses TGP/7 as basis for national descriptors
- QPs, examiners, breeders and others involved
  - based on: TGs for similar species, or
  - from descriptors developed by other Authorities, or
  - a general descriptor
- objective description of relative differences between the varieties

Cooperation between Authorities is critical for harmonization and efficiency
- but will need to accelerate
- some Authorities 'shy' to share descriptors because text is not yet completely to UPOV standard

Need to extend information on "Experience in DUS Testing" (TGP/5) to include list of national descriptors currently under development

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Thank you

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