

Technical Committee

TC/54/15

**Fifty-Fourth Session
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CHARACTERISTICS WHICH ONLY APPLY TO CERTAIN VARIETIES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this document is to consider amending the current guidance in document TGP/7 “Development of Test Guidelines” for excluding a characteristic from observation on the basis of a state of expression of a preceding characteristic.

2. The TC is invited to consider:

(a) the proposal to amend guidance in document TGP/7, Guidance Note 18 (GN 18), paragraph 3, as set out in paragraph 18 of this document; and

(b) the proposal to include a warning on the consequences of using the approach to exclude varieties from observation on the basis of a preceding pseudo-qualitative or quantitative characteristic, as set out in paragraph 19 of this document.

3. The structure of this document is as follows:

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4. 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
- TWV: Technical Working Party for Vegetables
- TWPs: Technical Working Parties

BACKGROUND

5. The following guidance is provided in document TGP/7 on characteristics which only apply to certain varieties:

“GN 18 (TG Template: Chapter 7: column 3) – Presentation of Characteristics: Heading of a characteristic

[...]

“3. *Characteristics which only apply to certain varieties*

“In some cases, the state of expression of a preceding qualitative characteristic determines that a subsequent characteristic is not applicable e.g. it would not be possible to describe the shape of leaf lobes for a variety which did not have leaf lobes. In cases where this is not obvious, or where the characteristics are separated in the Table of Characteristics, the heading of the subsequent characteristic is preceded by an underlined reference to the types of varieties to which it applies, on the basis of the preceding characteristic, e.g.:

“Only varieties with flower type: single: Flower: shape”

6. The TC, at its fifty-third session, held in Geneva from April 3 to 5, 2017, considered whether to amend document TGP/7, Guidance Note 18(3) “Characteristics which only apply to certain varieties”, to clarify that, in addition to the state of expression of a preceding qualitative characteristic, in some cases the state of expression of a preceding pseudo-qualitative or quantitative characteristic would also determine that a subsequent characteristic was not applicable (see document TC/53/31 “Report”, paragraphs 134 and 135).

7. The TC agreed to invite the TWPs, at their sessions in 2017, to consider the possibility and, if appropriate, identify the circumstances under which characteristics could be excluded from observation on the basis of a preceding pseudo-qualitative or quantitative characteristic and agreed to discuss the matter further at the TC, at its session in 2018.

COMMENTS BY THE TECHNICAL WORKING PARTIES

8. The TWA, TWV, TWO, TWF and TWC, at their sessions in 2017, considered document TWP/1/12 “Characteristics which only apply to certain varieties” (see documents TWA/46/10 “Report”, paragraphs 55 and 56; TWV/51/16, paragraphs 31 to 33; TWO/50/14 “Report”, paragraphs 19 to 21; TWF/48/13 “Report”, paragraphs 34 to 36; and TWC/35/21 “Report”, paragraphs 40 to 42).

9. The TWA, TWV, TWO, TWF and TWC agreed with the possibility to exclude varieties from observation on the basis of a preceding pseudo-qualitative or quantitative characteristic under particular circumstances, such as the impossibility to describe an organ that was not present in a variety or when variation existed only within a particular group of a crop.

10. The TWV recalled the importance to refer to a table of grouping within a species, such as in the Test Guidelines for lettuce (see document TG/13/11, chapter 5.3, reproduced as an Annex to this document).

11. The TWO, the TWF and the TWC agreed with the TWV that the approach of excluding varieties from observation on the basis of preceding PQ or QN characteristics should be used carefully and based on experience and discussions during the drafting of Test Guidelines, in order to be fully aware on the consequences.

12. The TWO noted that the scope of some Test Guidelines for ornamental plants covered an entire plant genus and some characteristics would only be applicable to particular groups of crops.

CONSIDERATION BY THE ENLARGED EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

13. Based on the contingency measures adopted for the transitional period until the fifty-fourth session of the TC, to be held in October 2018, the TC-EDC was invited to consolidate the comments made by the TWPs, at their sessions in 2017, and to formulate proposals for further consideration by the TWPs, at their sessions in 2018.

14. The TC-EDC, at its meeting held on March 26 and 27, 2018, considered document TC-EDC/Mar18/13 “Characteristics which only apply to certain varieties” (see document TC-EDC/Mar18/11 “Report”, paragraphs 17 to 20).
15. The TC-EDC noted that the TWA, TWV, TWO, TWF and TWC had agreed with the possibility to exclude varieties from observation on the basis of a preceding pseudo-qualitative or quantitative characteristic under particular circumstances.
16. The TC-EDC recommended that a proposal to amend guidance in document TGP/7 be considered by the Technical Committee, at its fifty-fourth session, e.g. to read: “In some cases, the state of expression of a preceding ~~qualitative~~ characteristic determines that a subsequent characteristic is not applicable [...]”.
17. The TC-EDC recommended the inclusion of a warning on the consequences of using the approach to exclude varieties from observation on the basis of a preceding pseudo-qualitative or quantitative characteristic, such as for grouping characteristics.

PROPOSAL

18. It is proposed that guidance in document TGP/7, Guidance Note 18 (GN 18), paragraph 3 be amended to read as follows (proposed text deletion indicated by ~~highlighting and strikethrough~~):

“3. Characteristics which only apply to certain varieties

“In some cases, the state of expression of a preceding ~~qualitative~~ characteristic determines that a subsequent characteristic is not applicable e.g. it would not be possible to describe the shape of leaf lobes for a variety which did not have leaf lobes. In cases where this is not obvious, or where the characteristics are separated in the Table of Characteristics, the heading of the subsequent characteristic is preceded by an underlined reference to the types of varieties to which it applies, on the basis of the preceding characteristic, e.g.:

“Only varieties with flower type: single: Flower: shape”

19. It is proposed that document TGP/7 GN 18 be amended to include a warning on the approach to exclude characteristics from observation on the basis of a preceding pseudo-qualitative or quantitative characteristic to read as follows (and insertion indicated by highlighting and underlining):

“The exclusion of characteristics from observation on the basis of a preceding pseudo-qualitative or quantitative characteristic should be used with caution, taking into account the consequences for the examination of distinctness. A grouping table could be used to ensure that characteristics are only excluded from observation on a robust basis.”

20. *The TC is invited to consider:*

(a) the proposal to amend guidance in document TGP/7, Guidance Note 18 (GN 18), paragraph 3, as set out in paragraph 18 of this document; and

(b) the proposal to include a warning on the consequences of using the approach to exclude varieties from observation on the basis of a preceding pseudo-qualitative or quantitative characteristic, as set out in paragraph 19 of this document.

[Annex follows]

EXTRACT FROM DOCUMENT TG/13/11 (LETTUCE)

Type	Example varieties	Plant: degree of overlapping of upper part of leaves (Char. 3)	Leaf: number of divisions (Char. 6)	Leaf: thickness (Char. 17)	Leaf: undulation of margin (Char. 20)	Leaf: venation (Char. 25)	<u>Only varieties with Plant: degree of overlapping of upper part of leaves: medium or strong: Head: shape in longitudinal section (Char. 27)</u>
Butterhead type	Clarion, Maikönig, Sartre	medium to strong	absent or very few	thin to thick	absent to weak	not flabellate	circular or narrow oblate
Novita type	Norvick	absent or weak	absent or very few	thin to medium	very weak to medium	flabellate	-
Iceberg type	Great Lakes 659, Roxette, Saladin, Vanguard 75	strong	absent or very few	thick	absent to medium	flabellate	circular or narrow oblate
Batavia type	Aquarel, Curtis, Funnice, Felucca, Grand Rapids, Masaïda, Visyon	absent or weak to strong	absent or very few	medium to thick	weak to very strong	flabellate	broad elliptic, circular or narrow oblate
Frisée d'Amérique type	Bijou, Blonde à couper améliorée	absent or weak	absent or very few	thin	absent to strong	flabellate or not flabellate or semi	-
Lollo type	Lollo rossa, Revolution	absent or weak	absent or very few	thin	strong to very strong	flabellate	-
Oakleaf type	Catalogna, Kipling, Muraï, Salad Bowl	absent or weak	few to many	thin	absent to weak	flabellate or not flabellate or semi	-
Multi-divided type	Curletta, Duplex, Jadigon, Rodagio	absent or weak	medium to very many	thin	weak to very strong	flabellate	-
Frillice type	Frilett	absent or weak	absent or very few	thick	weak to strong	flabellate	-
Cos type	Actarus, Blonde maraîchère, Pinokkio	absent or weak to medium	absent or very few	medium to thick	absent to weak	not flabellate	narrow elliptic
Gem type	Craquerelle du Midi, Sucrine, Xanadu	absent or weak to medium	absent or very few	medium to thick	absent to weak	not flabellate	broad elliptic, circular or narrow oblate
Stem type	Celtuçe, Guasihong	absent or weak	absent or very few	thin to medium	absent to weak	not flabellate	-