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REVIEW OF UPOV UNIFORMITY STANDARD FOR GRASSES

Document prepared by experts from the United Kingdom

REVIEW OF UPOV UNIFORMITY STANDARD FOR GRASSES

BACKGROUND

A review of the recommended UPOV uniformity standard of COYU P=0.002 was undertaken by the United Kingdom in March 2001 because of increasing problems with refusal of varieties using this standard alone.

The current recommended UPOV standard for COYU of P=0.002 was always known to be more strict than the old UK 2 x 1% within-year standard according to paper TWC/9/5 presented to UPOV by Dr Colin Weatherup in 1991. Therefore, although UPOV adopted a P=0.002 standard, a five year transitional period of operation at the more lenient P=0.001 standard was permitted. This option was taken up by some member states but in the UK it was agreed to try to work further with the P=0.002 standard in order to help reach agreement within UPOV on the move towards the adoption of COYU.

Problems in 1999

Between 1995 and 1998, the formal period for the introduction of COYU in the UK, uniformity decisions had always used the old 2 x 1% within-year standard as a 'safety-net'. This was because varieties under test over this period had all been entered before the change in standards and, it was considered, should not be put at a disadvantage by the introduction of the new standard. However, in 1999, the first year without the 2 x 1% ‘safety-net’, there were several additional problems which had resulted in two variety appeals.

Interim solution for 2000

For decisions taken in October 2000, the UK adopted interim procedures to try to reconcile problems and provide a short-term solution to the increasing potential for problems arising because of increased numbers of variety refusals on the basis of a lack of uniformity.

Only varieties which failed to meet both the UPOV recommended standard of P=0.002 and UPOV transitional standard of P=0.001 after three years of test were recommended for immediate refusal. UK candidate varieties with problems meeting the recommended standard but having no problems meeting the transitional standard were not refused directly but data for individual years were examined. If no problems were seen with the 1% within-year standard or a problem was noted in only one year, the decision on the variety was deferred for a fourth year when results across the three best years would be examined further.

However, the Group also recognised the urgent need for a study to examine uniformity standards and compare the “old” UK uniformity standard of 2 x 1% against the UPOV transitional standard of COYU at the P=0.001 level and the UPOV recommended standard of COYU at the P=0.002 level.

RESULTS

The results for the individual years 1998, 1999 and 2000 and the total over all three years are shown in Table 1 in the form of discordance tables for the variety decisions taken.

From Table 1d, it can be seen that out of the 240 variety decisions taken during 1998, 1999 and 2000, 231 varieties would have been found uniform using 2 x 1% within-years standard. However, using the COYU standard at P=0.002, a total of only 206 varieties were found uniform, while using the COYU standard at P=0.001, a total of 216 varieties were found uniform.

Out of the total of 240 variety decisions taken over the three years there were 213 similar decisions between the 2x1% within-years standard and the COYU standard at P=0.002 (205 acceptances : 8 refusals). However, there were 221 similar decisions for the COYU standard at P=0.001 (214 acceptances : 7 refusals).

Therefore, there was 88.75% agreement between the variety decisions taken using the 2 x 1% within-year standard and the COYU standard at P=0.002 and 92.08% agreement between the 2x1% within-years standard and the COYU standard at P=0.001.

CONCLUSION

In summary, while both COYU standards appear to be more stringent than the 2 x 1% within-years standard, the COYD standard at P=0.001 gave closer agreement with the 2 x 1% within-years standard.

The UK has decided to move to the P=0.001 level for uniformity decisions on grass varieties. This will be closer to the original UK standard of 2 x 1%. The TWC is invited to consider.

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Table 1

UNIFORMITY FINAL DECISIONS 1998 - 2000

WITHIN YEARS UNIFORMITY (2 x 1%) VERSUS COYU (@ p=0.002 & p=0.001)

a)1998

		COYU @ P=0.002	
		U	NU
2 x 1%UNIF	U	63	13
	NU	0	4

		COYU @ P=0.001	
		U	NU
2 x 1%UNIF	U	67	9
	NU	0	4

b)1999

		COYU @ p=0.002	
		U	NU
2 x 1%UNIF	U	77	7
	NU	1	4

		COYU @ p=0.001	
		U	NU
2 x 1%UNIF	U	80	4
	NU	2	3

c)2000

		COYU @ p=0.002	
		U	NU
2 x 1%UNIF	U	65	6
	NU	0	0

		COYU @ p=0.001	
		U	NU
2 x 1%UNIF	U	67	4
	NU	0	0

d)Years 1998-2000

		COYU @ p=0.002	
		U	NU
2 x 1%UNIF	U	205	26
	N U	1	8

		COYU @ p=0.001	
		U	NU
2 x 1%UNIF	U	214	17
	NU	2	7

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