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SELECTION OF ASTERISKED CHARACTERISTICS
(REVISION OF DOCUMENT TGP/7)

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1. The Enlarged Editorial Committee (TC-EDC), at its meeting on January 7, 2010, proposed the deletion of paragraph (c) in the following text of document TGP/7/1 "Development of Test Guidelines" GN 12 "Selecting a characteristic for inclusion in the Table of Characteristics":

"2. To be included in the Table of Characteristics, the characteristic must satisfy the criteria for a Standard Test Guidelines Characteristic, namely:

"(a) it must satisfy the criteria for use of any characteristic for DUS as set out in the General Introduction (Chapter 4.2) which are that it:

"(i) results from a given genotype or combination of genotypes;

"(ii) is sufficiently consistent and repeatable in a particular environment;

"(iii) exhibits sufficient variation between varieties to be able to establish distinctness;

"(iv) is capable of precise definition and recognition;

"(v) allows uniformity requirements to be fulfilled;

“(vi) allows stability requirements to be fulfilled, meaning that it produces consistent and repeatable results after repeated propagation or, where appropriate, at the end of each cycle of propagation;

“(b) it must have been used to develop a variety description by at least one member of the Union and

“(c) where there is a long list of such characteristics and, where considered appropriate, there may be an indication of the extent of use of each characteristic.”

2. The proposal for deletion of subparagraph (c) by the TC-EDC was made in conjunction with a proposal to develop further guidance on the selection of asterisked characteristics in a future revision of TGP/7 (document TGP/7/3). In particular, the TC-EDC noted that asterisked characteristics were very important for international harmonization of variety descriptions.

3. At its forty-sixth session, held in Geneva from March 22 to 24, 2010, the Technical Committee agreed with the proposal to delete GN 12(c) in document TGP/7/2 and agreed that further guidance on the selection of asterisked characteristics should be considered in a future revision of TGP/7 (document TGP/7/3) (see document TC/46/15 “Report on the conclusions”, paragraph 31).

4. To assist the Technical Working Parties in their development of further guidance on the selection of asterisked characteristics, the following information has been reproduced from document TGP/7/2 Draft 5:

“GN 13 Characteristics with specific functions

“1. Asterisked characteristics (TG Template: Chapter 7: column 1, header row 2)

“1.1 The General Introduction (Chapter 4.8: Table: Functional Categories of Characteristics) states that asterisked characteristics are “characteristics that are important for the international harmonization of variety descriptions.” The criteria for selecting a characteristic as an asterisked characteristic are that:

- “(a) it must be a characteristic included in the Test Guidelines;
- “(b) it should always be examined for DUS and included in the variety description by all members of the Union except when the state of expression of a preceding characteristic or regional environmental conditions render this inappropriate;
- “(c) it must be useful for the international harmonization of variety descriptions;
- “(d) particular care should be taken before selection of disease resistance characteristics.

“1.2 It should be clarified that criterion (b) is worded to ensure that members of the Union which are not able to examine the characteristic do not use this as a reason to object to the characteristic being agreed as an asterisked characteristic. Thus, any characteristic which satisfies the criteria and, in particular, is useful for the international harmonization of variety descriptions should be selected as an asterisked characteristic,

even if it cannot be examined for all varieties or by all members of the Union. The upper limit on the number of asterisked characteristics should, therefore, be determined by the number which are required to provide useful internationally harmonized variety descriptions.”

[...]

“4. *Relationship between Asterisked, Grouping and TQ characteristics*

The relationship between grouping, asterisked and TQ characteristics can be summarized as follows:

“(a) Grouping characteristics selected from the Table of Characteristics should, in general, receive an asterisk in the Table of Characteristics and be included in the Technical Questionnaire.

“(b) TQ characteristics selected from the Table of Characteristics should, in general, receive an asterisk in the Table of Characteristics and be used as grouping characteristics. TQ characteristics are not restricted to those characteristics used as grouping characteristics;

“(c) Asterisked characteristics are not restricted to those characteristics selected as grouping or TQ characteristics.”

5. At its thirty-ninth session, held in Osijek, Croatia, from May 24 to 28, 2010, the Technical Working Party for Agricultural Crops (TWA) considered document TWA/39/15 (see document TWA/39/27 “Report”, paragraphs 48 to 50).

6. The TWA agreed that the final sentence of GN 13.1 “Asterisked characteristics”, Section 1.2, should be amended to read “The number of asterisked characteristics should, therefore, be determined by the characteristics which are required to achieve useful internationally harmonized variety descriptions.”

7. The TWA concluded that the guidance provided in document TGP/7, GN 13, on the selection of asterisked characteristics was appropriate and sufficient, and that it was only necessary to ensure that the guidance was followed in the development of Test Guidelines.

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