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E-MAIL BULLETIN BOARD FOR VARIETIES AND SEEDS TECHNICAL MATTERS

Document prepared by experts from the United Kingdom

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INTRODUCTION

This note explains the background to the establishment of an electronic bulletin board for the discussion of technical matters concerned with plant varieties and seeds.

OPERATION

A bulletin board serves as a form of on-line special interest discussion group. Newcomers join the group by registering as members. Discussion takes place by e-mail. If a member is seeking advice on a problem he/she can send a message to the bulletin board address and the message is automatically distributed to all current members. Replies can be sent directly to the individual initiating the enquiry or to the bulletin board. Typically bulletin boards are used for posing and answering questions or for dissemination of information, e.g. notices of meetings.

There are several mailbase service agencies which provide the infrastructure that supports bulletin boards but they all operate in a similar way. Each bulletin board must have a list owner who is responsible for its operation. However, once set up, a bulletin board operates automatically with little input required from the list owner.

DETAILS

There is attached a 'template' which describes the aims of the proposed list and its expected membership. The aims as outlined are not exclusively UPOV-related for several reasons:

- the interests of most plant variety specialists extend beyond UPOV-related issues;
- experience suggests that bulletin boards with overly narrow (or too broad a) focus are not used.

Good practice guidelines for contributors to the bulletin board include the following:

- individuals who contribute do so as individuals and not as representatives of groups or organisations;
- copyright should be respected when sending emails to the bulletin board; text or data should not be sent without the author's or originator's permission; small amounts of data may be included in a message to illustrate a point or problem but should be 'anonymized' to preserve confidentiality
- unsolicited commercial email is not acceptable unless it is likely to be of direct interest to bulletin board members, such as software announcements, publications, conferences.

ACTION

The views of the TWC are sought on these proposals before steps are taken to establish a bulletin board.

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PROPOSED LIST TEMPLATE

Name of list: Varieties and Seeds

Description of list:

This list is for discussion of research and technological issues concerned with breeding and evaluation of plant varieties and the improvement of seed quality. It provides a forum for researchers/academics/crop specialists to raise questions or share information on technical matters concerned with variety development and seeds improvement at all stages from the molecular laboratory through to the farmer and onward to the consumer.

Estimated no. of members: 50

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