Interaction between ITPGRFA and UPOV Convention - United Kingdom experience

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• Background
• UK plant genetic resources
• Farmers’ rights and use of plant varieties
• Seeds marketing legislation
Background

UPOV Convention
Contracting party since 1968
1991 UPOV Convention since 1999

ITPGRFA
Contracting party since 2004
Implemented directly, without national legislation
Policy for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2004, updated in 2007 and maintained by subsequent governments

Overview of UK agriculture

- 244,000 km² total land area
- 64 m population
- Agriculture meets 60% of food requirements
- Agriculture about 1% of GDP
- 70% of land area is farmed
- Of which: 25% crops
  40% managed grassland
  25% rough grazing
- Large holdings, highly mechanised and productive
- Diverse farming types adapted to climate and geography
Plant genetic resources

• Significant PGR in landraces, heritage varieties and crop wild relatives
• Especially in PGR collections, resulting from long history of plant collecting and breeding
• High level of interest from small farmers and gardeners, including for niche food uses
• Concept of ownership by society
PGR collections

Designated to ITPGRFA Multilateral System:

- *Malus*, National Fruit Collection, Brogdale
- Wild species, Millennium Seed Bank, Kew Royal Botanic Gardens
- Vegetables, Genetic Resources Unit, University of Warwick
- *Pisum* and cereals, John Innes Centre
- Potato, flax and apple, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
- Cereals and vegetables, Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture
- Potatoes, James Hutton Institute

Farmers’ rights and use of plant varieties

- Most farmers use modern, improved varieties developed for UK conditions
- Good understanding of the importance of breeding and plant variety rights
- Broad acceptance of UPOV 1991 and the balance between breeder and farmer
- Effective system for collection of royalties on farm saved seed, introduced in 2007 through cooperation between farmers and breeders
PGR and seeds marketing legislation

• EU legislation for conservation varieties and amateur vegetables used to some extent, helping with in situ conservation of PGR

• eg conservation varieties of barley for niche beers and whisky heritage varieties of potatoes and vegetables for local use

• Many gardeners want to grow and conserve a wide range of heritage varieties

Thank you