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PFLANZENZÜCHTUNGEN

UNION INTERNATIONALE
POUR LA PROTECTION
DES OBTENTIONS VÉGÉTALES

INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF
NEW PLANT VARIETIES

COUNCIL

Fifth Session

Geneva, October 13-15, 1971

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR A UNIFORM SYSTEM
FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF PLANT VARIETY CHARACTERS

Report by the Secretary General

1. The Delegation of Germany (Fed. Rep.) has requested the Council to consider general principles for a uniform system for the assessment of plant variety characters and has presented a working paper which is intended to serve as a basis for discussion. The working paper is reproduced in the Annex to this report.

2. The Council is invited to take note of the above.

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Annex follows/

Annex to Document UPOV/C/V/14

UNIFORM UPOV SYSTEM FOR THE
ASSESSMENT OF PLANT VARIETY CHARACTERSWorking Paper of the German Delegation

I.

- (1) At the first meeting of the Chairmen of the Technical Working Parties, held in Geneva on February 3, 1971, matters relating to the uniform assessment and description of plant characters were discussed, and recommendations were elaborated for the preparation of guidelines.
- (2) It was agreed that in all States:
 - (a) the same scale would be used to denote the state of individual characters;
 - (b) each state would be expressed by the same word, or agreed translation (paragraph 32 of the report of February 25, 1971);
 - (c) a 1-9 scale would be used for the states of characters, whereby the individual numbers would be used in increasing order of magnitude for stronger, greater, denser, broader, later, more drooping, etc., states (paragraph 33 of the report of February 25, 1971).

II.

The agenda of the forthcoming Council meeting will include discussion of the first guidelines for the conduct of tests. It is evident from the completed drafts and those in process of completion that the recommendations mentioned in Part I above have on the whole been observed. The drafts also show, however, that the necessary alignment has not been made in every detail. For example, equivalent states of quantitative characters, whether given in words or in figures, are still expressed variously, thereby creating a risk of error or divergent interpretation.

III.

In order to give the guidelines the desired uniformity and essential simplicity, the following system for character assessment is proposed. It corresponds to a large extent to the recommendations formulated by the Chairmen of the Technical Working Parties.

A. Quantitative Characters

(1) The state of a character is expressed by a word-pair containing two opposite concepts, for instance:

weak/strong
short/long
small/large
fine/coarse
erect/drooping
pointed/blunt
low/high
narrow/broad
lax/dense
soft/firm
early/late
flat/deep

(2) On this basis the states are expressed either by the words alone or by addition of the word "very" in the case of extreme states. For instance:

very weak/very strong
very short/very long
very small/very large
very early/very late
very erect/very drooping
very pointed/very blunt
very flat/very deep

(3) Intermediate states of characters should always be expressed by the word "medium." (See column 5 of the table reproduced in Chapter IV.)

(4) The different states are given key numbers from 1 to 9: the numbers 1 to 3 denote insignificant or weak states, and the numbers 7 to 9 prominent or strong states. The basic elements of each word-pair listed in paragraph (1) above are given number 3 or 7, as the case may be, and the extremes, those with "very" added, number 1 or 9; for instance:

3	7	1	9
weak	strong	very weak	very strong
low	high	very low	very high
short	long	very short	very long
small	large	very small	very large
early	late	very early	very late
erect	drooping	very erect	very drooping
pointed	blunt	very pointed	very blunt

(5) Intermediate states, in other words, those situated between a state corresponding to one of the respective opposite word-pairs listed in paragraph (1) and

- (a) an extreme state are given the number 2 or 8, as the case may be;
- (b) a medium state are given the number 4 or 6, as the case may be;

For instance:

2	8
very weak to weak	strong to very strong
very short to short	long to very long
very erect to erect	drooping to very drooping
very early to early	late to very late
very flat to flat	deep to very deep
4	6
weak to medium	medium to strong
short to medium	medium to long
erect to medium	medium to drooping
early to medium	medium to late
flat to medium	medium to deep

(6) For characters which can also be absent, such as hairs and anthocyanin coloration, number 1 means "absent or very weak."

(7) In alternative observation, the state "absent" is coded by 1 and the state "present" by 9.

B. Qualitative Characters

These characters are classified from 1 to 9 according to state. Here the principle to be applied is that of assigning the lower numbers to smaller, lesser or lower qualities, in so far as this is possible. For instance:

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Wheat: ear color at maturity

white	1	brown	7
pink	3	black	9
dark red	5		

IV.

(1) This system can be applied to the assessment of all characters. It divides them into nine classes according to their state. If, however, only a small number of classes is possible, owing to the small amount of differentiation, these should be arranged accordingly. The table on the following page gives some examples of this:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
absent or very weak	very weak to weak	weak	weak to medium	medium	medium to strong	strong	strong to very strong	very strong
-	-	weak	-	medium	-	strong	-	-
-	-	early	-	medium	-	late	-	-
absent	-	weak	-	medium	-	strong	-	-
-	-	early	early to medium	-	medium to late	late	-	-
very weak	-	weak	-	medium	-	strong	-	very strong
-	-	weak	weak to medium	medium	medium to strong	strong	-	-
very early	-	early	-	medium	-	late	-	very late
very early	-	early	early to medium	-	medium to late	late	-	-
absent or very weak	-	weak	weak to medium	medium	medium to strong	strong	-	-
absent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	present