

# **Statutory performance trials: limitations and opportunities**

Andy Mitchell  
Plant Varieties and Seeds Division

# EU legislation

To be marketed, a variety must be on the UK National List or EU Common Catalogue

DUS            Distinct, uniform and stable  
Ensures identity

VCU            Value for cultivation and use  
Objective is to drive improvement

Taking all characteristics into account, a new variety must offer an overall improvement compared with varieties already on the National List

# UK National Listing system

UK system is run jointly by Defra and the Devolved Administrations

Testing costs are recovered from applicants

Integration of National List and Recommended List trials to avoid duplication, reduce costs, and maximise relevance

VCU trials are organised by BSPB and carried out by a range of trials operators

Testing procedures are developed by a group made up of technical representatives from Defra and the Devolved Administrations, BSPB, breeders and CEL

# OPPORTUNITIES

- Is this statutory push or industry pull?
- Does it allow signals to be given to breeders about certain types of varieties or traits?
- Can the VCU system be readily adapted in response to changing demands?
- Can the VCU system deal with new and unusual traits for an individual variety?

Is this statutory push or industry pull?

Given the objectives of full cost recovery and integration with the Recommended List, it is industry pull

Does it allow signals to be given to breeders about certain types of varieties or traits?

For example, recent changes in the weighting given to resistance to light leaf spot and phoma stem canker

Can the VCU system be readily adapted in response to changing demands?

National List trialling has adapted to routinely include separate categories for hybrid, semi-dwarf, HOLL and HEAR varieties

Can the VCU system deal with new and unusual traits for an individual variety?

National List decisions will take account of any special claim by a breeder

# Conclusions

Full cost recovery, industry focussed National List trialling has some limitations for evaluating traits which are not currently directly valued by growers and end users

Opportunities arise from the adaptability of the trialling system, to take account of new traits in individual varieties or to rapidly include new traits as they become valued