

Plant Variety Protection Debates: Connecting Law, Science and Social Science

The World Trade Organisation's obligation for all members to protect plant varieties as set out in Article 27.3b of the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights raises debates about appropriate systems of protection. To unpack these debates, the multidisciplinary conference will explore the process and importance of plant breeding, definition of plant varieties, conditions for protecting new plant varieties, as well as existing systems of protection. The conference will also address the future of intellectual property rights for plant varieties considering global discussions on agroecology, climate change, food security and food sovereignty.

The objectives of the conference are:

- To provide a platform for law, science and social science researchers to exchange knowledge about plant variety protection
- To bring together key organisations and stakeholders involved in plant variety protection to discuss recent developments
- To contribute to discussions on the pending review of the plant variety protection provision in the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (Art. 27.3b)

The Conference is open to students, researchers, academics, lawyers, plant breeders, farmers, civil society organisations and international organisations interested in food, agriculture and intellectual property rights.

Date: 14 June 2018.

Time: 09:00 - 17:00.

Venue: Room 1.07, Oculus Building, The University of Warwick, CV4 7AL.

[View campus map.](#)

Programme 14 June 2018

Registration: 09:00 - 09:30

Keynote Address: 09:30 -10:00

Panel 1: Understanding Plant Breeding

Three Presentations: 10:00 - 11:00

- (I) History of scientific plant breeding
- (II) Plant breeding processes and the development of improved plant varieties, including plant breeding techniques -genetic modification and hybrids.
- (III) Why plant breeding matters: including resistance to pests and diseases, environmental factors, nutrition, health and productivity.

Coffee: 11:00 -11:15

Panel 2: Legal v Botanical Definitions

Three Presentations: 11:15 - 12.15

- (I) History of intellectual property rights for plant varieties
- (II) Deconstructing the UPOV definition of plant varieties vis-à-vis botanical definition of improved plants and taxonomical classification of plants
- (III) Examining the implications of the UPOV conditions for protection (on biodiversity, protection of farmers varieties and landraces)

Distinct: The variety shall be deemed to be distinct if it is clearly distinguishable from any other variety whose existence is a matter of common knowledge at the time of the filing of the application.

Uniform: The variety shall be deemed to be uniform if, subject to the variation that may be expected from the particular features of its propagation, it is sufficiently uniform in its relevant characteristics.

Stable: The variety shall be deemed to be stable if its relevant characteristics remain unchanged after repeated propagation or, in the case of a particular cycle of propagation, at the end of each such cycle.

Lunch & Poster/Photograph Presentations: 12:15 - 13:15

Panel 3: Intellectual Property Protection for New Plant Varieties

Three Presentations: 13:15 - 14:15

- (I) Patent system.
- (II) UPOV Plant Breeder's Rights System.
- (III) *Sui Generis* systems incorporating farmers' rights to save, exchange and sell seeds, access-benefit sharing: International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Convention on Biological Diversity and Nagoya Protocol.
Emerging trends – technical variations that affect the scope of law. For example, royalty structures.

Coffee: 14:15 - 14:30

Panel 4: Intellectual Property Protection for New Plant Varieties Systems in Practice

Three Presentations: 14:30 - 15:30

National/Regional Level: Examples of Patent, UPOV Plant Breeders' Rights and *Sui Generis* Systems.

Coffee: 15:30 - 15:45

Roundtable: Cases, Complexities and the Future of Intellectual Property Rights for Plant Varieties: 15:45 - 16:45

Selected panel presenters, legal practitioners, civil society organisations and farmers.

Closing Remarks: 16:45