



Updates on Plant Variety Protection

Issue #20, 14 December 2015

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1. Editorial

This issue of the Newsletter features latest publications that *inter alia* discusses the impact of intellectual property including UPOV 1991 on smallholder farmers, the resulting consequence of consolidation in the seed industry and the need to protect and promote farmers' rights if agricultural biodiversity is to be safeguarded.

2. New Publications

2.1 Living on the Edge. Women, Agrobiodiversity and Livelihood

The predominance of commercially marketed crop varieties and the supporting policy and legal frameworks in modern industrial agriculture are displacing indigenous varieties cultivated over the ages and which have been the mainstay of local farming systems the world over putting at risk both food security and the livelihoods of farmers who now find themselves tied to a corporate-controlled supply chain. To counter this there is a need to turn to the enduring custodians of agricultural biodiversity - small farmers, in particular

women farmers, who are the repositories of traditional knowledge of seed conservation and the providers of food for their households and communities. Living on the Edge makes it clear that efforts to safeguard agricultural biodiversity must go hand in hand with the protection and promotion of farmers' rights everywhere.

Read more: Vanaja Ramprasad (2015), [Living on the Edge. Women, Agrobiodiversity and Livelihood](#), Green Foundation and Third World Network

2.2 Intellectual Property and Consolidation in the Seed Industry

Intellectual property protections on seeds have increased dramatically in recent decades, from the granting of patent-like protections on certain types of seeds in 1970 to the enforcement of contract provisions for seeds beyond the first sale in 2013. During this same period, the seed industry has experienced rapid consolidation.

Read more: Philip H. Howard, [Intellectual Property and Consolidation in the Seed Industry](#), Crop Science, Vol. 55, Nov - Dec 2015

2.3 UPOV 91 and other seed laws: a basic primer on how companies intend to control and monopolise seeds

This paper describes how UPOV 1991 and other seed laws are affecting farming communities.

Read more: GRAIN (2015), [UPOV 91 and other seed laws: a basic primer on how companies intend to control and monopolise seeds](#)

2.4 Which way forward for Zambia's smallholder farmers: Green Revolution input subsidies or agro-ecology?

This research paper is part of a three-year multi-country programme looking at the impacts of the Green Revolution on small-scale farmers in southern Africa, with a particular focus on seed and soil fertility, including a discussion of Zambia's plant variety protection legislation.

Read more: African Centre for Biodiversity (2015), [Which way forward for Zambia's smallholder farmers: Green Revolution input subsidies or agro-ecology?](#)

2.5 The expansion of the commercial seed sector in sub-Saharan Africa: Major players, key issues and trends

The private seed industry has made dramatic gains in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in recent years, gains that are likely to have profound negative impacts upon millions of small-scale farmers across the continent.

Read more: African Centre for Biodiversity (2015), [The expansion of the commercial seed sector in sub-Saharan Africa: Major players, key issues and trends.](#)

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