

Protection of New Agricultural Plant Varieties Making Remarkable Progress in China

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In 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture earnestly implemented the spirit of No.1 Central Document and the No.8 Document by the State Council, followed requirements in the National Plan for the Implementation of Intellectual Property Rights Strategy (2012) and made remarkable progress in the protection of new agricultural plant varieties.

New progress in the protection of new agricultural plant varieties

In 2012, the protection of new agricultural plant varieties showed four characteristics. First, the amount of applications increased and the accumulated amount surpassed the 10 000-threshold. The Ministry of Agriculture had received a total of 10,381 applications, with ones submitted in 2012 standing at a historic high of 1361, up 106 from 2011. The annual amount of application in 2012 ranked 2nd among UPOV members. The accumulated approved plant varieties reached 4,035.

Second, the amount of applications by enterprises surpassed that by research institutes, marking the accelerated pace of enterprises becoming the major force of innovation in this regard. In 2012, domestic enterprises submitted 579 applications, while research institutes submitted 533, marking the second year that enterprises overtaken research institutes in filing protection applications.

Third, a majority of the applications were still for grains, cotton and oil plants. In 2012, the five main crops, namely rice, corn, wheat, cotton and soybeans accounted for 1,011 applications, about 75% of its total.

Fourth, applications for foreign varieties continued to grow, and that situation helped enrich China's plant resources. In 2012, 97 such applications were submitted for plants including anthuriums, lilies and corn, which was 103.6% of the average amount for the past five years.

Further optimization of regulation system

To solve the chaos surrounding multi names for one plant variety and several varieties sharing the same name, and to further strengthen and maintain market order, the ministry released a set of regulations on the naming of agricultural plant varieties and revised the Measures for the Examination and Approval of Main Agricultural Plant Varieties. The ministry also edited the directory for the 9th batch of protected agricultural plant varieties, further expanding the scope of protection and bringing benefits to more plant breeders.

Stronger technical support system

The ministry undertook the task to examine Agricultural Industry DUS Testing Guideline, organized meetings to examine standards for 6 batch of testing guideline standards and approved DUS testing guidelines for 84 new plant varieties including citrus. It also approved the technical standards of using DNA fingerprints for the identification of 14 plant varieties including regular wheat and soybeans, and improved the standard sample database of DNA fingerprints for new varieties and protected varieties of corn. It built a name index system for agricultural plant varieties and widely gathered information about known plant varieties.

Increased publicity activities and training

The ministry organized discuss marking the 15th anniversary of the promulgation of Regulation on the Protection of New Plant Varieties, presented the news conference to announce that China's protection applications surpassed 10 000-threshold and various other press briefings on new agricultural plant varieties. Information released at these meetings was widely reported by the CCTV, Science and Technology Daily, China Intellectual Property News, Farmers' Daily, among other media outlets. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of UPOV, the Ministry printed and released a brochure of the New Plant Varieties' Protection in China. Also in the same year, the ministry organized training workshops on new plant varieties' protection and DUS testing, which helped staff members of the sector increase their specialized theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

More participation in international and regional exchanges and cooperation

The ministry actively participated in UPOV meetings, organized the 43rd meeting for UPOV technical working group on fruit trees, the international workshop on DNA molecular testing technology under the auspices of East Asia Forum, and also the China –Netherlands workshop on testing technologies for new plant varieties. As the chairman of UPOV executive and legal committee, Lyu Bo successfully presided over the committee's 65th and 66th meetings. The ministry also hosted the 4th China-South Korea working group meeting and signed memorandum on further cooperation.

In the spirit of implementing cross-strait cooperation in intellectual property rights protection, the MoA organized the annual meeting of cross-strait working group on breeders' rights and a symposium on the protection of new plant varieties. It also led a delegation to Taiwan for exchanges on new plant variety protection, during which the two sides discussed issues including the necessity and feasibility to list phalaenopsis, rose and Indian jujube in the directory of protected plants.

Date submitted: Nov. 5, 2014

Received, edited and uploaded: Nov. 10, 2014

