# Plant Breeding Innovation Statement & Principles

## **STATEMENT**

Plant breeders create new plant varieties to provide better quality products for consumers, farmers and the processing value chain. Plant breeding has always responded to society’s need for increased crop yields, better tasting varieties and pest and disease resistant crops. Ultimately, plant breeding fosters sustainable farming practices to meet the needs of a growing global population.

Scientific breakthroughs have always driven the efficiency and effectiveness of plant breeding.   
Mendel’s laws of heredity turned plant breeding from an art into a science in the early 1900s. Since   
then an increased understanding of plant biology and plant genes has enabled plant breeders to more precisely develop plant varieties that are better adapted to respond to the challenges facing agriculture and society today and in the future.

Building on the mechanisms created by nature, the latest innovations in plant breeding methods   
simply achieve the relevant breeding results in less time and with greater precision.

A key issue not only for plant breeders worldwide but also for society is the evolving public policies that regulate plant varieties developed through the latest plant breeding methods. To ensure the use of   
these breeding methods is not stalled at the research and development stage, clear public policy is essential.

Such government policy has to be firmly based on sound scientific principles. Without this, we risk impeding innovation in plant breeding. Without this, we limit farmers’ access to better varieties, and consequently the availability of improved and sufficient products for consumers.

Agriculture is a global concern so there is clearly a need for harmonized government policies. Harmonization facilitates the trade and movement of seed and helps create a level playing field. Consistent, science-based policy means that farmers and consumers around the world can enjoy the benefits of products developed through the latest breeding methods.

**PRINCIPLES**

* + - * Plant varieties developed through the latest breeding methods should not be differentially regulated if they are similar or indistinguishable from varieties that could be produced through established breeding methods.
      * Plant breeders need legal certainty provided by government policies.
      * Regulation should be grounded in sound scientific principles.
      * Inappropriate regulation and associated costs will impede the utilization of innovative breeding methods.
      * Government policies should facilitate innovation and utilization of advanced breeding applications by public and private plant breeders in developed and developing countries.
      * Harmonized policies are essential for both research collaboration and trade.

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