

NEWS RELEASE

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Defra and Scottish Government renew BSPB contract for organisation of National List trials

Renewed five-year contracts for the organisation of statutory trials as part of the National List system for approving new crop varieties have been signed with the British Society of Plant Breeders (BSPB), Defra and the Scottish Government confirmed today.

BSPB has organised Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU) testing and trials under official supervision for all crop species except potatoes since 2005.

The Society's chief executive Dr Penny Maplestone welcomed the continuation of existing arrangements as the best way to provide cost-effective variety testing services for Government and industry alike.

"Over the past 12 years, BSPB organisation of VCU trials has delivered savings to plant breeders and the wider industry by minimising the costs of variety registration and evaluation, while at the same time operating a dual-purpose system producing trials data for both National List and Recommended List systems."

"Before this system was agreed between the national authorities and industry stakeholders, the costs of statutory variety evaluation were spiralling out of control, and separate trials programmes were carried out to generate information for NL and RL purposes."

"Renewal of the BSPB contract by Defra and the Scottish Government provides confirmation that this remains the most efficient and flexible system of variety evaluation, reducing costs and duplication for the industry while also delivering an assurance of high quality and technically relevant trials data," said Dr Maplestone.

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Contact for further information:

Dr Penny Maplestone, BSPB

Tel: 01353 653200

E-mail: penny@bspb.co.uk

Issued by:

Daniel Pearsall, Front Foot Communications

Tel: 01557 820504

E-mail: daniel.pearsall@frontfoot.uk.com