



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

United Kingdom Variety List Trials: Trial Procedures for Official Examination of Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU) Harvest 2023

Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*),

Hairy Vetch (*Vicia villosa*)

August 2022



© Crown copyright 2022

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v.3. To view this licence visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/ or email PSI@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

webmaster@apha.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/apha

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government.

Contents

Section A - Summary of VCU Trial Assessments Required.....	1
Section B – Seed Handling Procedures.....	2
B.1. Seed Handling Procedures	2
B.2. Authentication of VCU Seed.....	2
Section C – Growing Trial Procedures.....	3
C.1. Responsibilities	3
C.2. Site Suitability	3
C.3. Sowing the Trial	4
C.4. Husbandry.....	6
C.5. Harvesting.....	7
C.6. Records.....	10
Section D - Disease Testing Procedures	15
D.1 Assessment of Natural Infection	15
Section E - Quality Testing Procedures	16
E.1. Responsibilities	16
E.2. Quality Assessment Methodology for Obligatory and Additional Tests	16
Section F - Trial Design and Data Handling Procedures.....	18
F.1. Plan Validation and Storage.....	18
F.2. Data Recording	18
F.3. Data Processing	19
F.4. Other Tests and Trials.....	19
Appendix 1 - Approved Trial Organisers / Operators for Common Vetch, Hairy Vetch	20
Appendix 2 - Seed Treatment Products for use on NL Trials.....	21
Appendix 3 - Seed Despatch Deadline	22
Appendix 4 - VCU Growing Trial Operators and Trial Locations for Vetch	23

Appendix 5 - Control Varieties for VCU Assessments for Vetch	24
Appendix 6 - Dates by Which Records and Samples Should Be Submitted	25
To Trials Organiser	25
Plot Records to Data Handling Operator	25
Plot Samples to Quality Testing Operator	25
Appendix 7 - Assessment Keys for Vetch Diseases	26
Leaf diseases	26
Infection Disease Severity Description	26

Section A - Summary of VCU Trial Assessments Required

Bold = Obligatory

Italics = Additional. Assessed only if requested by the applicant

Type of character	Reference	Description of assessment
Yield	Section C	Fresh yield
Yield	Section C	Dry matter yield
Impact of environment	Section C	Early vigour
Impact of environment	Section C	Ground cover
Impact of environment	Section C	Flowering
Resistance to harmful organisms	Section D	Ascochyta blight
Resistance to harmful organisms	Section D	Root rots
Quality characteristics	Section E	Dry matter content
Quality characteristics	Section E	Crude protein (first and second cuts)

Further Measurements

The following must be measured or recorded in all trials, following procedures in Section C.

Sowing Date

Harvest date

Plot size

Section B – Seed Handling Procedures

B.1. Seed Handling Procedures

B.1.1 See GENERAL INFORMATION, SECTION 5 - Minor Crop VCU Procedures Introduction.

B.2. Authentication of VCU Seed

B.2.1 The Seed Handling Operator must forward 500 g of untreated sample of the seed submitted of every variety in the trial, for authentication by the DUS test centre by the date specified by APHA. The Trials Organiser will notify the minimum quantity required to Seed Handling Operators annually.

Section C – Growing Trial Procedures

C.1. Responsibilities

C.1.1 The Growing Trial Operators are responsible for conducting the trials according to these procedures.

C.2. Site Suitability

C.2.1 The Growing Trial Operator will be responsible for providing a suitable site, which meets the following criteria:

C.2.2 Previous cropping should follow local best practice.

C.2.3 Soil type should be typical of those on which vetch is grown locally. Soil fertility and texture should be uniform across the site. The soil should be sufficiently uniform to avoid variation in the growth of the trial.

C.2.4 The trial should be sited away from trees, hedges, headlands and other features, which are likely to cause uneven growth or encourage damage from wild fauna.

C.2.5 The trial area should be cultivated in the direction of ploughing and drilled across the direction of ploughing and cultivation such that each plot receives similar treatments. Cultivations should follow best local practice.

C.2.6 The frequency, direction and approximate date of all cultivations carried out since the last crop should be recorded in the site details record sheet.

C.3. Sowing the Trial

C.3.1 Plot Size

C.3.1.1 Plots must be drilled or broadcast to produce a minimum plot length of 4.5 m after cutting back. Minimum sown width is 0.9 m with a maximum unsown gap between plots of 0.5 m. Minimum harvest plot size is 6.5 m². The row number per plot should not be less than 10 rows for drilled plots. Three replicates will be sown.

C.3.2 Plant population

C.3.2.1 When sowing, self-cleaning type drills should be used:

Common vetch 50 kg / ha in March/April depending on soil conditions.

Hairy vetch 50 kg / ha in spring or late summer

C.3.3 Trial layout

C.3.3.1 The Trials Organiser following consultation with APHA produces provisional sowing lists. The Trials Organiser will make final sowing lists available to Growing Trial Operators, along with the trial plans produced by the Trial Design and Data Handling Operator.

C.3.3.2 The trial should be sown according to the plan produced by the Trial Design and Data Handling Operator and may be an incomplete block design. In an incomplete block design, each replicate is split into a number of sub-blocks. Any splitting of replicates must be between sub-blocks and not through sub-blocks. Varieties can be moved within a sub-block but must not be moved from their sub-block. Varieties must not be moved around within the plan e.g., if drilling errors occur. If plots are moved out of their original sub-block they will have to be treated as missing plots. If there are any queries, please contact the Trials Organiser.

C.3.3.3 Buffer plots may be required in some instances. The Trials Organiser will advise if this is the case.

C.3.3.4 If there is a need to replace a planned variety e.g., if varieties are withdrawn, affected plots must be sown with any of the standard control varieties. Any such replacements must be agreed with the Trials Organiser. The control varieties are listed in [Appendix 5](#).

C.3.4 Drilling

C.3.4.1 Care must be taken with drill settings and drilling speed to ensure satisfactory and uniform establishment and plant population from plot to plot. It is also important to ensure that there is no carryover of seed between plots.

C.3.4.2 At least one row of discard should be drilled on either side of the trial with the same drill and at the same time that the trial is drilled

C.3.4.3 Precautions must be taken to avoid any missing rows. Any missing rows or parts of rows must be noted on the drilling plan and reported to the Trials Organiser within one month of emergence.

C.3.5 Confirmation of trial layout

C.3.5.1 After full establishment and within one month of sowing the Growing Trial Operator must confirm that the trial has been sown to plan or give details of any changes to plan. This should be done by clearly highlighting the changes in the electronic plan and returning it to the Trial Design and Data Handling Operator.

- Return a completed site data 1 sheet including the following information:
- Site location details including how to get to the field.
- Sketch showing the layout of the trial in the field, in relation to other trials and showing access roads, gates, etc. The location of the access gates should utilise the navigation platform What3Words.com
- Trial sketch showing plot numbers and variety codes and/or names.
- A short post-establishment report of the condition of the trial.

C.4. Husbandry

C.4.1 Agronomy

Where not specified in these procedures, agronomy should follow best local practice.

C.4.2 Fertiliser application

Fertiliser not permitted without the specific agreement of the Trials Organiser.

C.4.3 Pathways

A gap (pathway) at the end of each plot of at least 1m is required.

C.4.4 Plot assessment

Plots should be assessed at the time of the population count to determine whether they are suitable for harvest. Weak plots may occur due to mechanical or varietal problems. If the problem is considered to be varietal the plots must remain as part of the trial. If the problem is considered to be mechanical the plots should either be treated as missing or as half plots.

Plots affected should be notified to the Trials Organiser at the time of detection

C.4.4.1 Half plots - Plots with gaps or poor uniformity may occur

If plots have gaps due to mechanical or agronomic problems it may be necessary to eliminate the poor area by reducing the plot to a uniform length. Removal must be across all rows - whole rows cannot be discarded. These plots should be measured and pegged at the time of the population counts

C.4.4.2 Missing plots - Plots with gaps or poor uniformity may occur

If plots are weak due to mechanical or agronomic problems throughout their entire length, it may be necessary to make the plots missing. These plots should be pegged at the time of the population counts and should be entered in subsequent data records with a symbol indicating there is no recorded value associated with this plot (see C.6.2.5). The plots should be clearly indicated when the data is sent to the Trial Design and Data Handling Operator.

C.5. Harvesting

C.5.1 Timing of harvesting

C.5.1.1 Date of harvesting will be according to a schedule which will be drawn up by the Growing Trial Operator. Two harvest cuts to be taken, one for main growth and one for regrowth.

C.5.1.2 Plots can be topped over at the discretion of the trials operator in the autumn/winter following sowing to provide a uniform plot canopy. Plots should be trimmed to their final harvest length as described in C.4.7 above. The plot dimensions must be measured prior to harvesting.

C.5.2 Harvesting method

C.5.2.1 Plots should be harvested using a specialist grass harvester with a reciprocating-knife cutter bar. The harvested herbage must be weighed either on-board or separately, using an electronic balance graduated to 0.1 kg. All harvested material must be removed from the plot after weighing.

Yield records should be transmitted electronically to the appropriate Data Handling Operator within seven working days of each cut.

C.5.3 Samples

C.5.3.1 A sample of the chopped material (minimum 300 g) should be taken for dry matter analysis from each plot.

C.5.3.2 All samples should be labelled with the labels provided by the Trials Organiser.

C.5.3.3 If required, samples of dried material for protein content testing should be forwarded immediately to:

Quality Analysis Testing

NIAB Park Farm

Villa Road

Impington

Histon

CB4 9NZ

Tel: 01223 233258

It is important that samples are despatched promptly after harvest. Notification of sample dispatch should be faxed to the appropriate Trials Organiser at the same time.

C.5.4 Submission of data

C.5.4.1 [Appendix 6](#) lists the records, with deadlines, to be sent to the Trials Organiser.

Diary sheets and any other field records should be returned to the Trials Organiser within 5 working days of harvest.

C.5.4.2 All plot records should be transmitted to the Trial Design and Data Handling Operator following the deadlines set out in [Appendix 6](#). The Growing Trial Operator should ensure that data are free from errors before transmission. After scrutiny, copies of results will be returned to the Growing Trial Operator for action as agreed by the data handling operator.

C.5.4.3 All samples should be sent to the Quality Testing Operator following the deadlines set out in [Appendix 6](#).

C.6. Records

C.6.1 There are four components:

1. Diary: field notes of trial status, recording and inspections
2. Site data part 1, including full location details:
 - i) Map of site location - showing nearby settlements and roads;
 - ii) Sketch - showing the layout of trials in the field with access points;
 - iii) Trial layout - showing plot numbers and variety codes/names.
3. Site data part 2, details of agrochemical applications and irrigation.
4. Plot records and data.

C.6.1.1 An entry in the Diary sheet should be made on every trial visit and any observations relevant to variety performance should be recorded. If the trial is in good condition, with no problems, this should be recorded.

C.6.2 Plot records

C.6.2.1 Plot data may be recorded direct onto a data logger using a system approved by the Trials Organiser or recorded on paper then entered and validated onto a computer

using an approved system. A system of ensuring that data are recoverable, in the event of loss of original data, must be implemented, e.g. copy and safe storage. Whichever method is used, individual plot data will only be accepted by the appropriate Trial Design and Data Handling Operator in an approved format using the measure names and units as listed in Section C.6.3.

C.6.2.2 All observations should be checked at the time of recording to ensure that they lie within acceptable limits for the character recorded. Observations that have been designated as exceptional by the recorder should be identified with a note on the approved data file or hard copy medium describing the possible causes together with a recommendation for their exclusion or inclusion in the trial analysis.

C.6.2.3 Plot numbers on record sheets must correspond with the numbering on the field plan.

C.6.2.4 If a character is not recorded or is missing the Growing Trial Operator should indicate in the diary or on the recording sheet the reason why it has been excluded.

C.6.2.5 Where a plot record is missing the Growing Trial Operator should record this in any data file or hard copy medium as a symbol thereby indicating there is no recorded value associated with this plot.

C.6.2.6 Specific plot records must be made as counts or on the scales shown for each character. Only the character names as listed may be used. All records should be returned to the Data Handling Operator as soon as possible after they are completed.

C.6.2.7 All records must be returned as soon as reasonably possible and when complete for the whole trial. Indicative deadlines are given in [Appendix 7](#). All records must be returned by the final deadlines.

C.6.3 Procedures for recording Characters

C.6.3.1 The following procedures must be followed for measuring all characters to be used in NL decision-making.

C.6.3.2 SOWING DATE, OBLIGATORY (Day/month/year)

This is recorded in Part 1 of the Site Information Form.

C.6.3.3 EARLY VIGOUR, all plots, OBLIGATORY (1-9)

- 1 very thin
- 9 very thick

C.6.3.4 FLOWERING, all plots, ADDITIONAL (1-9)

- 1 very thin
- 9 very thick

C.6.3.4 FRESH YIELD, all plots, OBLIGATORY (kg)

Enter the total harvested weight in kg per plot and provide the harvested plot dimensions with the record. If the plot lengths or widths are not the same for every plot, a separate record must be submitted.

C.6.3.5 DRY MATTER WEIGHT, all plots, OBLIGATORY (kg)

A detailed procedure for the assessment of dry matter content is given in Section E. Also specify the fresh weight taken for the sample. If the figures are DM% then enter the fresh weight of sample as 100.

C.6.3.6 GROUND COVER, all plots, OBLIGATORY (1-9)

Assess the ground cover of sown species in each plot on a 1 to 9 scale, where 9 is most coverage.

C.6.3.7 CHOCOLATE SPOT/ASCOCHYTA BLIGHT/ROOT ROTS, from all plots, OBLIGATORY (if present) (%)

Record as described in Section D

C.6.3.8 HARVEST DATES, OBLIGATORY (Day/month/year)

Scored following the key given in [Appendix 7](#). Scores should be made 7-14 days after a cold period, to allow for expression of symptoms.

C.6.3.9 Site Factors

Any factors which may have affected the yield of the trial or individual plots must be noted and accompany the yield data.

Where varietal differences are seen in pest or disease attack, records should be made either as an estimate % of plants affected or as % leaf area attacked in accordance with the procedure in Section D for disease.

Records for other scores should be taken as % plants affected or on a 1 to 9 scale. Include definitions of 1 to 9 on the scale.

C.6.3.10 Trial Inspection

All trials will be inspected by the Trial Inspection and Technical Validation Operator and, in some cases, it may be necessary to visit on more than one occasion.

The requirements for Growing Trial Operators in respect of inspections are to:

1. Give inspectors reasonable access to trials and provide full location and site details (if not already given with site data 1)
2. Provide the inspector with information (for example pesticide sprays applied etc) within seven days of a request
3. Co-operate with the inspector in making any non-routine assessments required to establish the validity of the trial (for example population counts)
4. Carry out any action agreed in consultation with the inspector. In particular it is important that any requirement to shorten plots is undertaken. ($\text{Establishment\%} \times \text{Germination \%}$).

Section D - Disease Testing Procedures

D.1 Assessment of Natural Infection

Recording of disease on the growing trials will be the responsibility of the Growing Trial Operator at the appropriate sites.

D.1.1 Diseases recorded

D.1.1.1 No inoculated disease tests are carried out routinely.

D.1.1.2 No Disease Observation Plots are carried out routinely.

D.1.1.3 All disease assessments should be sent to the Data Handling Operator as soon as they are made.

D.1.2 Naturally occurring disease in VCU growing trials

D.1.2.1 Foliar disease should be recorded when the level of infection on the most affected variety is over 5% of the leaf area. Percentage leaf area infected on the plot as a whole should be recorded. See [Appendix 7](#).

Section E - Quality Testing Procedures

E.1. Responsibilities

E.1.1 The Quality Testing Operator appointed by the Trials Organiser is responsible for conducting approved quality tests according to these procedures. The Growing Trial Operators are responsible for producing representative samples for quality assessment as indicated in Section C.

E.2. Quality Assessment Methodology for Obligatory and Additional Tests

E.2.1 Dry Weight determination (OBLIGATORY)

The treatment of samples and the time interval between cutting and weighing should be such that there is no significant moisture loss between the weighing of the plot fresh yield and the weighing of the fresh weight of the sample.

A fully representative sub-sample (min 300 g) of well-chopped fresh material is accurately weighed, or an accurately recorded catch weight (min 300 g recorded to one decimal place) taken. Although in some instances all of the sampling and weighing of fresh material may be carried out in the field, it is acceptable for samples to be brought to the laboratory for weighing. If the latter option is followed the representative sample is immediately sealed in a 500 gauge polythene bag and kept out of direct sunlight and as cool as possible until transported to the laboratory. Each sample is identified with a label.

The sample is placed in the drier which must be at a temperature of $100\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 4\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ with the air recirculator set in the range 80-100% recirculation in order to restore the temperature to $100\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 4\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ as rapidly as possible. When the temperature is restored to $100\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 4\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ the air regulator is set at 80% recirculation i.e. 20% fresh hot air. The air regulator is critical for even rapid drying. The samples are dried $100\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 4\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ for such time as is necessary for complete drying.

The dried sample is carefully removed from the drier as soon as the sample is cool enough for accurate weighing. The dry weight is recorded to one decimal place.

Section F - Trial Design and Data Handling Procedures

F.1. Plan Validation and Storage

F.1.1 After the trial has been drilled, the Growing Trial Operator must:

- a) Confirm that the trial has been drilled according to plan and provide the sowing date, by returning site data 1 and associated trial sketch to the Trial Design and Data Handling Operator.
- b) If any amendments to the plan have been made, return a hard copy of the plan to the Trial Design and Data Handling Operator with any amendments clearly indicated. Alternatively, amendments may be notified electronically with the agreement of the Trial Design and Data Handling Operator.

F.1.2 The Trial Design and Data Handling Operator will check these for statistical validity and, once this has been done, will load the plan on the database.

F.2. Data Recording

F.2.1 Data are recorded using the methods and characters given in Sections C, D and E.

F.2.2. Site information is recorded for each trial including, for example, data on previous cropping, cultivations, soil details and fertiliser applications.

F.2.3 Details of any agrochemical applications are also recorded and forwarded to the Trials Organiser.

F.3. Data Processing

F.3.1 Processing of individual agronomic and disease variates

F.3.2 A list of the agronomic, yield and disease variates, which may be recorded and processed, are specified in Sections C, D and E. After scrutiny, copies of the results will be returned to the Growing Trial Operator for action as agreed by the Trials Organiser.

F.4. Other Tests and Trials

F.4.1 Any additional or alternative designs required for the assessment of additional VCU characters not detailed in Annex D of the **MINOR CROPS VCU TRIAL PROTOCOL** will be added to these **Procedures** as and when approved by the NLSC.

Appendix 1 - Approved Trial Organisers / Operators for Common Vetch, Hairy Vetch

Activity	Organisers / Operators Responsible
Trials Organiser	BSPB
Trial Design and Data Handling Operator	NIAB
Growing Trial Operator	NIAB
Seed Handling Operator	NIAB
Trial Inspection and Technical Validation Operator	NIAB
Quality Testing Operator	NIAB
Data Review and Standard Setting Operator	NIAB

Appendix 2 - Seed Treatment Products for use on NL Trials

Approved products compliant with restrictions, manufacturer's guidance and Trials
Organiser's approval.

Appendix 3 - Seed Despatch Deadline

VCU seed must be delivered to the Seed Handler by 5th December for a spring sowing, 5th February for autumn sowing.

Appendix 4 - VCU Growing Trial Operators and Trial Locations for Vetch

Growing Trial Operator	Seed Handling Operator (If not trial operator)	Location of Trial
NIAB		N Yorks

Appendix 5 - Control Varieties for VCU

Assessments for Vetch

Common vetch control: Barvicos

Hairy vetch control: Hungvillosa

Appendix 6 - Dates by Which Records and Samples Should Be Submitted

To Trials Organiser

Record	Latest date of receipt by Trials Organiser
Site data part 1 (including site sketch)	Within 1 month of drilling trial
Site data part 2	By the time trial is harvested
Plot records (in approved electronic format)	Growing Trial Operator should notify Trials Organiser that trial has been harvested within 2 days of harvest

Plot Records to Data Handling Operator

Record	Date
Plot records should be sent to Data Handling Operator	Within 10 days of record being taken

Plot Samples to Quality Testing Operator

Samples	Date
Plot samples for quality testing SHOULD be sent to Quality Testing Operator	Within 2 days of harvest

Appendix 7 - Assessment Keys for Vetch Diseases

Leaf diseases

1. Examine leaves in 3 areas of each plot.
2. Include all necrosis and chlorosis attributable to disease to be assessed.
3. Estimate % infection using the description below, interpolating values if necessary.
4. Record the average % infection from the 3 areas.

Infection Disease Severity Description

Infection	Description of severity
0	No infection observed
0.1	Older leaves with a trace of infection, other leaves uninfected.
1	Older leaves with up to 10 % infection, other leaves largely uninfected.
5	Older leaves with up to 25 % infection, middle aged leaves with a trace of infection.
10	Older and middle-aged leaves with up to 25 % infection, young leaves largely uninfected.
25	Leaves of all ages appear 50 % infected 50 % green on average
50	Leaves of all ages appear more infected than green on average
75	Very little green tissues left.
100	No green tissue left