



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

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

Minor crops: Linseed, Soya bean, Spring lupin,  
Forage rape, Swede, Sunflower, Forage rye, Fodder  
kale, Mustard, Fodder radish, Forage oat, Fodder  
beet, Hemp, Vetch, Annual Ryegrass

January 2023

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# General information

## 1 Purpose

1.1 This document sets out the approved procedures to be used for growing trials, tests and assessments as required by the current **Protocol for Official Examination of Value for Cultivation and Use for Minor Crops**.

## 2 Scope

2.1 These procedures apply to all varieties of Minor Crops. Minor crops are defined as those where the average number of candidates in the last 3 years was 5 or less, or the number of varieties on the National List is 10 or less.

## 3 Responsibilities

### 3.1 Procedures Development Group

The Procedures Development Group is responsible for reviewing these procedures annually and making amendments for which it has responsibility, in accordance with the provisions of the VCU Protocol for Minor Crops.

### 3.2 Organisers and Operators

British Society of Plant Breeders Ltd (BSPB)

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3.2.2 The Trials Organiser is responsible for ensuring all **VCU Protocol** and **Procedures** requirements are followed and liaison with all Operators carrying out trials for National List purposes, including supply of seed and data handling.

### 3.2.3 Data Handling Operator

The Data Handling Operator identified by the Trials Organiser is responsible for trial design and data validation in accordance with the **VCU Protocol** and associated **Procedures**.

### 3.2.4 Growing Trial Operators, Seed Handling Operators and Quality Testing Operators.

The Trials Organiser is responsible for identifying potential Growing Trial Operators and Quality Testing Operators to carry out trials and tests as determined by the Procedures Development Group annual review in accordance with the **VCU Protocol**, and these **Procedures**. The Trials Organiser is also responsible for finding Seed Handling Operators who are able to carry out seed handling. Seed Handling Operators prepare trial seed for sowing on behalf of any Growing Trial Operator in accordance with the **VCU Protocol** and these **Procedures**.

3.2.5 A list of all approved Organisers and Operators is shown in Appendix 1 of each Annex which describes the Growing Trials, Tests and Assessment Procedures applicable to each minor crop.

### 3.3 VCU Protocol and Procedures non-compliance

3.3.1 The Trials Organiser will forward any reports on **VCU Protocol or Procedures** non-compliance to APHA within 1 week of receipt. The Trials Organiser will obtain authorisation from APHA for any actions, including those necessary to remedy non-compliances, which are not within the requirements of the **VCU Protocol**. Such actions must be recorded as non-compliance. Where emergency action is required and APHA staff are not available (eg evenings/weekends) the Trials Organiser should act but report this to APHA at the earliest opportunity. Where GMOs are concerned the arrangements are as detailed in section 3.4.

### 3.4 Procedures for GM varieties

3.4.1 The National Authorities and Trials Organiser will develop procedures for GM varieties if an application for a GM candidate variety is received.

### 3.5 Processing of seed

3.5.1 The Trials Organiser is responsible for organising the processing of seed of candidate varieties submitted by the applicant, and seed of control, or other reference varieties, in accordance with the requirements set out in these **Procedures** and the current **VCU Protocol**. The Trials Organiser will ensure that any seed treatments or additives are approved for the purpose. Seed treatment products for use in National List trials are listed in Appendix 2 of each Annex which describes the Growing Trials, Tests and Assessment Procedures applicable to each minor crop.

### 3.6 Dispatch of seed

3.6.1 The Trials Organiser will arrange for seed to arrive at the Seed Handling Operator by the relevant deadline. The Seed Handling Operator is responsible for processing and dispatch of seed to Growing Trial Operators and DUS testing centres (including, where appropriate, foreign testing authorities) within the relevant deadlines. Dates are given in Appendix 3 of each Annex which describes the Growing Trials, Tests and Assessment Procedures applicable to each minor crop.

### 3.7 Monitoring of Growing Trial Operators and Seed Handling Operators – documentation

3.7.1 The Trials Organiser will take any necessary action to enforce deadline dates and quality standards for required documentation.

3.7.2 The Trials Organiser will ensure Growing Trial Operators and Seed Handling Operators have access to all current protocols and procedures relevant to them and that they are notified of any amendments.

### 3.8 Seed quantities

3.8.1 The Trials Organiser will determine the quantity of seed required for all VCU tests and trials in each annual series, including authentication, and will notify the applicant of quantities and delivery addresses.

### 3.9 Labelling of seed

3.9.1 The Trials Organiser is responsible for ensuring all seed is clearly labelled with variety name/breeders' reference and AFP number.

### 3.10 Seed quality

3.10.1 Seed submitted for VCU testing should meet the standards for the final generation of seed given in the appropriate seed regulations, in respect of germination, analytical purity and content of other seeds and any other impurities. The seed must be free of adventitious genetically modified presence and accompanied by a declaration to this effect.

## **4 Summary of growing trials, tests, and assessment procedures for minor crops**

4.1 The number of trials and site locations are as detailed in Appendix 4 of each Annex which describes the Growing Trials, Tests and Assessment Procedures applicable to each minor crop.

4.2 Control varieties are listed in Appendix 5 of each Annex which describes the Growing Trials, Tests and Assessment Procedures applicable to each minor crop.

4.3 The Trials Organiser is responsible for informing the Growing Trial Operators of the additional characters, which must be recorded as and when requested by applicants, and any samples that may be required for analysis.

## **5 Seed handling procedures**

### **5.1 Responsibilities**

5.1.1 Seed Handling Operators are responsible for carrying out the following seed handling procedures.

### **5.2 Seed handling procedures**

5.2.1 Seed Handling Operators will receive a sowing list from the Trials Organiser, along with instructions as to which seed treatments or additives may be used. A list of seed treatments is at Appendix 2 of each Annex which describes the Growing Trials, Tests and Assessment Procedures applicable to each minor crop.

5.2.2 Seed Handling Operators must record receipt of seed from applicants by checking it off against the sowing list as it arrives. The Trials Organiser and Applicant should be notified of any damage to the packaging, loss of seed or identification problems that would effect the validation of the trial.

5.2.3 Once seed has been treated, it must be kept safely until required for drilling, authentication and quality control.

5.2.4 Seed Handling Operators must record use of treatment chemicals in accordance with best practice and in full observance of all manufacturers' recommendations and relevant statutory obligations. Any seed treatment equipment used must be fit for the purpose, properly calibrated, set up and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation.

5.2.5 Cross contamination must be avoided by ensuring equipment is clean between weighing and treatments.

5.2.6 A record must be kept of chemicals used and date of treatment.

5.2.7 Seed treatment should take place as near to the drilling date as possible.

## **6 Authentication of VCU seed**

6.1 APHA will notify the Seed Handling Operator of the DUS Test Centre to which a sample of each variety should be sent for authentication. Details of the size of sample can be found in Section B of each minor crop Annex.

6.2 All samples must be kept under suitable conditions for the authentication procedures required and must be clearly labelled and sealed.

6.3 If the level of off-types recorded in DUS tests or VCU authentication of a candidate exceeds 10%, the VCU tests will be considered invalid.



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