

# Leading National Agriculture Groups Announce “United Front” in Support of Thailand & Improved Plant Variety Protection Act



Following a November 23rd stakeholder session to discuss proposed improvements to Thailand’s Plant Variety Protection Act, some of the most prominent names in the nation’s agricultural sector have today decided to join forces in their support for next steps.

The presidents of the Thai Seed Trade Association, Dr Chaireg Aagwansupyakorn, the Seed Association of Thailand, Dr Juangjun Duangpatra, the Plant Breeding and Crop Multiple Association of Thailand, Mr Pichet Grudloyma, and the secretary of the Federation of Safe Agriculture, Mr Sukan Sangwanna, held a round-table discussion on the current landscape and implications for Thailand with what is being considered. The signatures of these Thai agricultural leaders, as well as the logos for the organizations they represent.

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), based in Geneva, Switzerland, has a mission to provide and promote an effective system of plant variety and protection with the aim of encouraging the development of new varieties of plants for the benefit of society.

It focuses on patents for plant varieties in a way that many farmers in developing countries perceive they are prevented from using saved seed or that of protected varieties, presenting disadvantages to them. Others argue plant variety protection allows them more access to new and improved varieties with bigger and more disease and pest resistant yields.

Debate on the issues is considered vital, especially for countries such as Thailand, which exports many foods and also has many subsistence farmers.

Thailand’s government recognizes UPOV’s position with specific exceptions.

Research and development in the field of sustainable food, feed, fiber and fuel needs is intensive and competitive, making intellectual protection an important issue for growers and developers.

The purpose of the November discussion concerned plant breeders’ rights in Thailand and UPOV’s mission.

Under a 1991 UPOV Act, developing countries have specific allowances. These include exemptions for breeders producing plants for non-commercial purposes, such as subsistence farmers.

The current Thailand draft amended Plant Variety Protection Act incorporates an exemption in circumstances in which the relevant minister decides this is warranted.

## About UPOV

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) is an intergovernmental organization with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. UPOV was established by the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants. The Convention was adopted in Paris in 1961 and it was revised in 1972, 1978 and 1991. UPOV’s mission is to provide

and promote an effective system of plant variety protection, with the aim of encouraging the development of new varieties of plants, for the benefit of society.

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