



China unveils new IP system for plant breeding to boost innovation in the seed industry

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Liu Lihua, head of the ministry's Department of Seed Industry and head of the office for the protection of new plant varieties, said stronger intellectual property protection is essential to revitalizing China's seed industry. "Innovation is at the core of seed industry revitalization," Liu said at a news conference. "Strengthening intellectual property protection for the seed industry provides the greatest incentive for breeding innovation," she said.

The EDV system is designed to protect the rights of breeders whose original plant varieties serve as the basis for new varieties developed through further breeding. Under the system, breeders of essentially derived varieties should obtain authorization from the owners of the original protected varieties before commercializing them.

The first implementation catalog of the new rules was published on the same day. The initial list includes 10 crops, namely rice, wheat, cotton, rapeseed, peanut, Chinese cabbage, chili pepper, foxtail millet, broad bean, and peach. The ministry said additional crops could be incorporated in the future after authorities evaluate the implementation of the first batch and assess breeding advances.

To ensure the system can be effectively implemented and disputes can be resolved efficiently, the ministry has issued technical guidelines for determining whether a variety is essentially derived and established decision thresholds for making such determinations, Liu said. The measures are intended to provide breeders, regulators and judicial authorities with practical tools for resolving intellectual property disputes involving new plant varieties, she added.

The ministry will work with other government departments to further strengthen intellectual property protection in the seed industry, improve the institutional environment for breeding innovation and revitalize the country's seed industry, it said.

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