

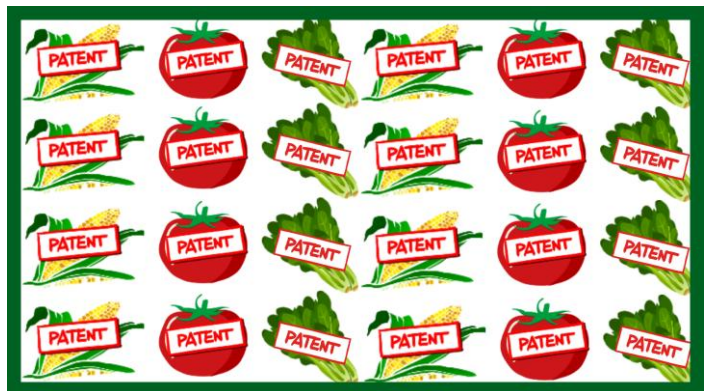


Just 7 patents affect 145 conventionally bred plant varieties

Recent research shows why the EU should say NO to planned NGT deregulation

10 December 2025 / Recent research conducted by *No Patents on Seeds!* revealed that the European Patent Office (EPO) granted around 40 patents claiming conventional breeding in 2025. Seven of these patents impact 145 conventionally bred plant varieties. They are all included in an industry database (PINTO), which lists conventionally bred plant varieties impacted by patents and on the market. Unlike other plant varieties, these plants may not be used by other breeders without a license agreement. One of the patents was granted to ChemChina / Syngenta (EP2464213) and is especially worrying as it affects 125 maize varieties.

In total, more than 1000 conventionally bred plant varieties are already affected by patents in Europe. It is well-known that patents claiming conventional breeding and naturally occurring gene sequences are highly problematic, especially in relation to small and medium (SME) traditional plant breeding companies. Just one license enabling access to the patented resources can easily cost more than 100.000 €. In addition, breeders have to accept new dependencies on the patent holders. A recent study published by the European Commission confirmed that these kinds of patents were already having a deterrent effect on traditional plant breeding.



Graphics: Spinach & Corn: Cllker-Free-Vector-Images / Pixabay, Tomato: Claudia Radig-Willy

The seven patents we identified mostly cover naturally occurring gene variants that confer resistance to plant diseases, e.g. viral or fungal pathogens. However, the breeding and marketing of new plant varieties are highly dependent on access to genetic resources.

“If patents on conventional breeding and naturally-occurring gene variants are not stopped, many breeding companies will have to close down due to excessively high costs and legal uncertainties. This would have major consequences not only for plant breeding, but also for agriculture and food production. We will all become dependent on decisions made by those companies which apply for the highest number of patents. The EU has to stop these patents now to protect the future of our food,” says Johanna Eckhardt from *No Patents on Seeds!*.

Patents on plants obtained from new genetic engineering (NGT) are expected to further increase the ongoing ‘seed monopoly’. Therefore, in the debate on future EU regulation of NGT plants, the EU Parliament proposed to at least prohibit patents on conventional plant breeding and naturally occurring gene variants. However, as seen in the final draft text negotiated in December 2025, this demand was not taken on board.

The European Commission has now decided to wait for the conclusions of another expert group and is not willing to take effective measures. Meanwhile, the harmful effect on traditional breeding will continue to grow. Since no adequate solutions were adopted to these problems in the negotiations on future NGT regulation, *No Patents on Seeds!* urges the Members of the European Parliament and the EU Member States not to approve the current proposal. The negative effects of patents on seeds are well documented. It is now time to stop it.

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Further information

- The latest research report by *No Patents on Seeds!*:
<https://www.no-patents-on-seeds.org/en/7-Patents-Report>
- The PINTO database: <https://euroseeds.eu/pinto-patent-information-and-transparency-on-line/>
- The study of the EU Commission:
https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/strategy/intellectual-property/patent-protection-eu/protection-biotechnological-inventions_en

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