

no patents on seeds



Overview of patent applications and patents granted on conventional breeding in Europe

January 2016

This backgrounder gives a brief analysis of patent applications on conventional breeding in 2015 at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in Geneva, as well as at the European Patent Office in Munich (EPO). In addition, it contains an overview of the total number of patent applications and patents granted on conventional breeding since 2000.

In 2015, around 100 patent applications were identified concerning conventional breeding. These patents are on carrots, potatoes, brassica plants, maize, melons, pepper, rice, lettuce, soybeans, spinach, tomatoes, wheat and onions. Amongst the applicants are big companies such as Bayer, Dupont/Pioneer, Monsanto, Syngenta and Dow AgroSciences.

Wheat, brassica plants and melons, each the subject of six patent applications, are the most targeted species. Further, several of the applications are worded in very general terms so that no specific species can be named. Figure 1 shows species that were the subject of more than one patent application.

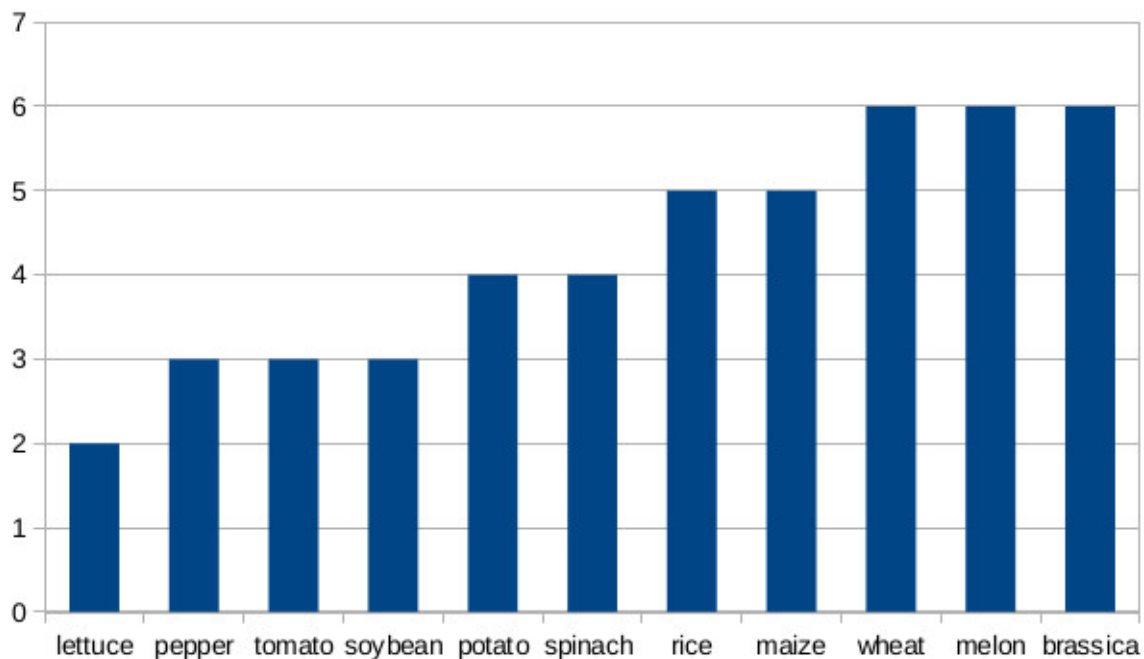


Figure 1: European patent applications on conventional breeding in 2015 (WO and EP) according to species.
Source: *No Patents on Seeds!*

Figure 2 shows the number of European patent applications (WO and EP) and patents already granted (EP) on conventional plant breeding since 2000 (accumulated). All in all, around 1400 patent applications on conventional breeding are pending, and the EPO has so far granted around 180 patents.

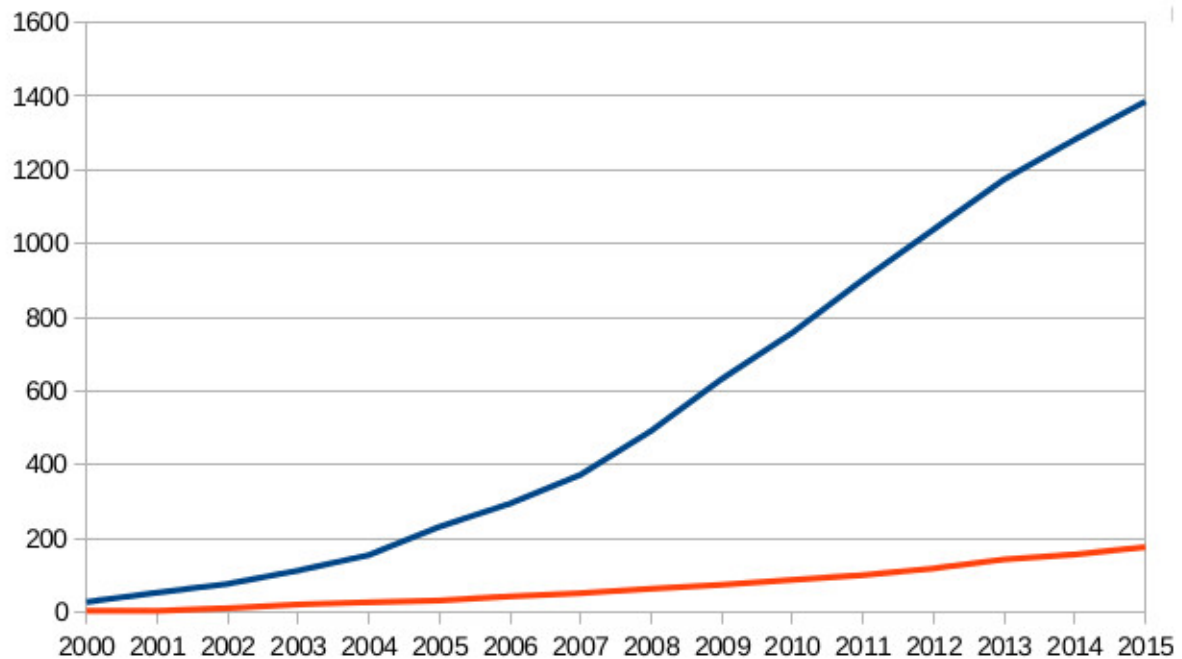


Figure 2: European patent applications (WO and EP, upper line) and patents granted (EP, lower line) on conventional plant breeding from 2000 until 2015, accumulated. Source: *No Patents on Seeds!*

The initiative “No Patents on Life!” (which is part of the Gene-ethical Network in Germany) has for several years now followed developments in patent applications and the granting of patents on plant and animal breeding. The research is conducted by Ruth Tippe. Patent monitoring is funded by Greenpeace Germany and is also the basis for reports and background material published by *No Patents on Seeds!*.

Further information:

Then, C. & Tippe, R. (2015) Patents on plants and animals - time to act for European politicians, published by *No Patents on Seeds!*, [http://no-patents-on-seeds.org/sites/default/files/news/report no patents on plants 2015.pdf](http://no-patents-on-seeds.org/sites/default/files/news/report_no_patents_on_plants_2015.pdf)