

*Plant Variety Protection Laws and Regulations***7 CFR 97.13 When the owner is deceased or legally incapacitated.**

In case of the death of the owner or if the owner is legally incapacitated, the legal representative (executor, administrator, or guardian) or heir or assignee of the deceased owner may sign as the applicant. If an applicant dies between the filing of his or her application and the granting of a certificate thereon, the certificate may be issued to the legal representative, heir, or assignee, upon proper intervention.

**7 CFR 97.14 Joint applicants.**

(a) Joint owners shall file a joint application by signing as joint applicants.

(b) If an application for certificate is made by two or more persons as joint owners, when they were not in fact joint owners, the application shall be amended prior to issuance of a certificate by filing a corrected application, together with a written explanation signed by the original applicants. Such statement shall also be signed by the assignee, if any.

(c) If an application has been made by less than all the actual joint owners, the application shall be amended by filing a corrected application, together with a written explanation, signed by all of the joint owners. Such statement shall also be signed by the assignee, if any.

(d) If a joint owner refuses to join in an application or cannot be found after diligent effort, the remaining owner may file an application on behalf of him or herself and the missing owner. Such application shall be accompanied by a written explanation and shall state the last known address of the missing owner. Notice of the filing of the application shall be forwarded by the Office to the missing owner at the last known address. If such notice is returned to the Office undelivered, or if the address of the missing owner is unknown, notice of the filing of the application shall be published once in the Official Journal. Prior to the issuance of the certificate, a missing owner may join in an application by filing a written explanation. A certificate obtained by less than all of the joint owners under this paragraph conveys the same rights and privileges to said owners as though all of the original owners had joined in an application.

**7 CFR 97.15 Assigned varieties and certificates.**

In case the whole or a part interest in a variety is assigned, the application shall be made by the owner or one of the persons identified in § 97.13. However, the certificate may be issued to the assignee, or jointly to the owner and the assignee, when a part interest in a variety is assigned.

**7 CFR 97.16 Amendment by applicant.**

An application may be amended before or after the first examination and action by the Office, after the second or subsequent examination or reconsideration as specified in § 97.107, or when and as specifically required by the examiner. Such amendment may include a specification that seed of the variety be sold by variety name only as a class of certified seed, if not previously specified or if previously declined. Once an affirmative specification is made, no amendment to reverse such a specification will be permitted unless the variety has not been sold and labeled or publication made in any manner that the variety is to be sold by variety name, only as a class of certified seed.

**7 CFR 97.17 Papers of completed application to be retained.**

The papers submitted with a completed application shall be retained by the Office except as provided in § 97.23(c). After issuance of a certificate of protection the Office will furnish copies of the application and related papers to any person upon payment of the specified fee.

**7 CFR 97.18 Applications handled in confidence.**

(a) Pending applications shall be handled in confidence. Except as provided below, no information may be given by the Office respecting the filing of an application, the pendency of any particular application, or the subject matter of any particular application. Also, nor will access be given to or copies furnished of any pending application or papers relating thereto, without written authority of the applicant, or his or her assignee or attorney or agent. Exceptions to the above may be made by the Commissioner in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552 and § 1.4 of this title, and upon a finding that such action is necessary to the proper conduct of the affairs of the Office, or to carry out the provisions of any Act of Congress, or as provided in sections 56 or 57 of the Act and § 97.19.

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(b) Abandoned applications shall not be open to public inspection. However, if an abandoned application is directly referred to in an issued certificate and is available, it may be inspected or copies obtained by any person on written request, and with written authority received from the applicant. Abandoned applications shall not be returned.

(c) Decisions of the Commissioner on abandoned applications not otherwise open to public inspection (see paragraph (b) of this section) may be published or made available for publication at the Commissioner's discretion. When it is proposed to release such a decision, the applicant shall be notified directly or through the attorney or agent of record, and a time, not less than 30 days, shall be set for presenting objections.

**7 CFR 97.19 Publication of pending applications.**

Information relating to pending applications shall be published in the Official Journal periodically as determined by the Commissioner to be necessary in the public interest. With respect to each application, the Official Journal shall show:

- (a) Application number and date of filing,
- (b) The name of the variety or temporary designation,
- (c) The name of the kind of seed, and
- (d) Whether the applicant specified that the variety is to be sold by variety name only as a class of certified seed, together with a limitation in the number of generations that it can be certified.

Additional information, such as the name and address of the applicant or a brief description of the distinctive features of the variety, may be published only upon request or approval received from the applicant, at the time the application is filed or at any time before the notice of allowance of a certificate is issued.

**7 CFR 97.20 Abandonment for failure to respond within the time limit.**

(a) Except as otherwise provided in § 97.104, if an applicant fails to advance actively his or her application within 30 days after the date when the last request for action was mailed to the applicant by the Office, or within such longer time as may be fixed by the Commissioner, the application shall be deemed abandoned. The application fee in such cases will not be refunded.

(b) The submission of an amendment to the application, not responsive to the last request by the Office for action, and any proceedings relative thereto, shall not operate to save the application from abandonment.

(c) When the applicant makes a bona fide attempt to advance the application, and is in substantial compliance with the request for action, but has inadvertently failed to comply with some procedural requirement, opportunity to comply with the procedural requirement shall be given to the applicant before the application shall be deemed abandoned. The Commissioner may set a period, not less than 30 days, to correct any deficiency in the application.

**7 CFR 97.21 Extension of time for a reply.**

The time for reply by an applicant to a request by the Office for certain action, shall be extended by the Commissioner only for good and sufficient cause, and for a specified reasonable time. A request for extension and appropriate fee shall be filed on or before the specified time for reply. In no case shall the mere filing of a request for extension require the granting of an extension or state the time for reply.

**7 CFR 97.22 Revival of an application abandoned for failure to reply.**

An application abandoned for failure on the part of the applicant to advance actively his or her application to its completion, in accordance with the regulations in this part, may be revived as a pending application within 3 months of such abandonment, upon a finding by the Commissioner that the failure was inadvertent or unavoidable and without fraudulent intent. A request to revive an abandoned application shall be accompanied by a written statement showing the cause of the failure to respond, a response to the last request for action, and by the specified fee.

*Plant Variety Protection Laws and Regulations***7 CFR 97.23 Voluntary withdrawal and abandonment of an application.**

(a) An application may be voluntarily withdrawn or abandoned by submitting to the Office a written request for withdrawal or abandonment, signed by the applicant or his or her attorney or agent of record, if any, or the assignee of record, if any.

(b) An application which has been voluntarily abandoned may be revived within 3 months of such abandonment by the payment of the prescribed fee and a showing that the abandonment occurred without fraudulent intent

(c) An original application which has been voluntarily withdrawn shall be returned to the applicant and may be reconsidered only by refile and payment of a new application fee.

(d) Transitional provision An applicant whose application is pending on April 4, 1995, may notify the Plant Variety Protection Office in writing that he or she wishes to withdraw the application and refile it under the Plant Variety Protection Act as amended in 1994. Payment of the current application fee is required but no other formalities are necessary.

**7 CFR 97.24 Assignee.**

The assignee of record of the entire interest in an application is entitled to advance actively or abandon the application to the exclusion of the applicant.

**7 CFR 97.100 Examination of applications.**

(a) [Reserved]

(b) Examinations of applications shall include a review of all available documents, publications, or other material relating to varieties of the species involved in the application, except that if there are fundamental defects in the application, as determined by the examiner, the examination may be limited to an identification of such defects and notification to the applicant of needed corrective action. However, matters of form or procedure need not, but may, be raised by an examiner until a variety is found to be new, distinct, uniform, and stable and entitled to protection.

**7 CFR 97.101 Notice of allowance.**

If, on examination, it shall appear that the applicant is entitled to a certificate, a notice of allowance shall be sent to the applicant or his or her attorney or agent of record, if any, calling for the payment of the prescribed fee, which fee shall be paid within 1 month from the date of the notice of allowance. Thereafter, a fee for delayed payment shall be made as required under § 97.175.

**7 CFR 97.102 Amendments after allowance.**

Amendments to the application, after the notice of allowance is issued, may be made, if the certificate has not been issued.

**7 CFR 97.103 Issuance of a certificate.**

(a) After the notice of allowance has been issued, the prescribed fee is received by the Office, and the applicant has clearly specified whether or not the variety shall be sold by variety name only as a class of certified seed, the certificate shall be promptly issued. Once an election is made and a certificate issued specifying that seed of the variety shall be sold by variety name only as a class of certified seed, no waiver of such rights shall be permitted by amendment of the certificate.

(b) The certificate shall be delivered or mailed to the owner

**7 CFR 97.104 Application or certificate abandoned.**

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, if the fee specified in the notice of allowance is not paid within 1 month from the date of the notice, the application shall be considered abandoned.

(b) Upon request by the Office, the owner shall replenish the viable basic seed sample of the variety. Upon request, the sample of seed which has been replaced shall be returned to the owner, otherwise it shall be destroyed. Failure to replenish viable basic seed within 3 months from the date of request shall result in the certificate being regarded as abandoned. No sooner than 1 year after

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the date of such request, notices of abandoned certificates shall be published in the Official Journal, indicating that the variety has become open for use by the public and, if previously specified to be sold by variety name as "certified seed only," that such restriction no longer applies

(c) If the allowance fee, the viable basic seed sample or the fee for delayed payment are submitted within 9 months of the final due date, it may be accepted by the Commissioner as though no abandonment had occurred. For good cause, the Commissioner may extend for a reasonable time the period for submitting a viable basic seed sample before declaring the certificate abandoned.

(d) A certificate may be voluntarily abandoned by the applicant or his or her attorney or agent of record or the assignee of record by notifying the Commissioner in writing. Upon receipt of such notice, the Commissioner shall publish a notice in the Official Journal that the variety has become open for use by the public, and if previously specified to be sold by variety name as "certified seed only," that such restriction no longer applies

**7 CFR 97.105 Denial of an application.**

(a) If the variety is found by the examiner to be not new, distinct, uniform, and stable, the application shall be denied.

(b) In denying an application, the examiner shall cite the reasons the application was denied. When a reason involves the citation of certain material which is complex, the particular part of the material relied on shall be designated as nearly as practicable. The pertinence of each reason, if not obvious, shall be clearly explained

(c) If prior domestic certificates are cited as a reason for denial, their numbers and dates and the names of the owners shall be stated. If prior foreign certificates or rights are cited, as a reason for denial, their nationality or country, numbers and dates, and the names of the owners shall be stated, and such other data shall be furnished, as may be necessary to enable the applicant to identify the cited certificates or rights.

(d) If printed publications are cited as a reason for denial, the author (if any), title, date, pages or plates, and places of publication, or place where a copy can be found shall be given.

(e) When a denial is based on facts known to the examiner, and upon request by the applicant, the denial shall be supported by the affidavit of the examiner. Such affidavit shall be subject to contradiction or explanation by the affidavits of the applicant and other persons

(f) Abandoned applications may not be cited as reasons for denial.

**7 CFR 97.106 Reply by applicant; request for reconsideration.**

(a) After an adverse action by the examiner, the applicant may respond to the denial and may request a reconsideration, with or without amendment of his or her application. Any amendment shall be responsive to the reason or reasons for denial specified by the examiner

(b) To obtain a reconsideration, the applicant shall submit a request for reconsideration in writing and shall specifically point out the alleged errors in the examiner's action. The applicant shall respond to each reason cited by the examiner as the basis for the adverse action. A request for reconsideration of a denial based on a faulty form or procedure may be held in abeyance by the Commissioner until the question of the variety being new, distinct, uniform, and stable is settled.

(c) An applicant's request for a reconsideration must be a bona fide attempt to advance the case to final action. A general allegation by the applicant that certain language which he or she cites in the application or amendment thereto establishes the variety is new, distinct, uniform, and stable without specifically explaining how the language distinguishes the alleged new, distinct, uniform, and stable variety from the material cited by the examiner shall not be grounds for a reconsideration.

**7 CFR 97.107 Reconsideration and final action.**

If, upon reconsideration, the application is denied by the Commissioner, the applicant shall be notified by the Commissioner of the reason or reasons for denial in the same manner as after the first examination. Any such denial shall be final unless appealed by the applicant to the Secretary within 60 days from the date of denial, in accordance with §§ 97.300-97.303. If the denial is