

## The creation of a new organisation — TystofteFoundation

*Gerhard Deneken, Director of TystofteFoundation*

### Transformation of tasks

On 1 July 2015, the TystofteFoundation took over the operation of the technical examinations concerning VCU and DUS testing, control plots and variety administration from the Danish AgriFish Agency. The Danish Regulation No 943 of 8 November 2015 describes the transfer of tasks, which are conducted according to internationally recognised scientific methods. On the same day, the TystofteFoundation purchased the premises at Tystofte from the Danish state. This day marked a new chapter in the history of Danish variety testing.

Many of our stakeholders celebrated the transformation with us on 30 June 2015 with a nice reception in our park.

During the first year, the foundation received financial donations as well as technical equipment from many of our stakeholders. This was important and crucial to ensure the liquidity in the early stages of the foundation.



*The Chairman of the TystofteFoundation, Thor G Kofoed, receives the keys to the technical examinations from Deputy Director General, Danish AgriFish Agency, Emil Fannikke Kiær.*

### The TystofteFoundation

The main responsibility of the TystofteFoundation is to conduct the technical and administrative tasks concerning the statutory variety testing according to the rules for registration on the Danish national list or for the grant of plant variety protection. TystofteFoundation also conducts the control plots (variety identity and purity) for seed certification.

The foundation is an independent organisational and financial unit serving the Danish plant-breeding industry and seed multipliers with the necessary technical examinations needed to receive governmental approval from the Danish AgriFish Agency. The members of the board of the TystofteFoundation are nominated by relevant organisations, namely the following:

- Danish Agriculture and Food Council: Chairman Thor G. Kofoed.
- Association of Plant Variety Owners in Denmark:
  - Vice Chairman, Director Kim B Pedersen, and
  - Director Birger Eriksen.
- Danish Seed: Director Anders Mondrup.
- Representative of the Employees: DUS Coordinator Erik Lawaetz.
- Pajbjergfonden: Senior Scientist Lise Nistrup Jørgensen.

A cooperation agreement has been signed between the TystofteFoundation and the Danish AgriFish Agency, which describes the interfaces, among other things. The enclosed picture presents the principal concepts and cooperation relations.

The Danish AgriFish Agency is a governmental institution ([www.naturerhverv.dk](http://www.naturerhverv.dk)) under the Danish Ministry of Environment and Food. It is responsible for the approval of new varieties and seed certification in Denmark. The Danish AgriFish Agency represents Denmark in the administrative bodies of the UPOV and the CPVO. TystofteFoundation is responsible for the Danish representation in technical bodies in the UPOV and the CPVO and operates the technical examinations concerning variety testing and control plots.

Director Kristine Riskær, of the Danish AgriFish Agency's Centre for Plants and Agricultural Holdings Act, regularly follows the foundation's developments and operations by participating as an observer at the board meetings. Furthermore, the Danish AgriFish Agency conducts an annual audit of the TystofteFoundation in order to secure impartiality and make sure that the statutory issues are fully respected.

A red line between the board and the chief executive of the foundation ensures that no members of the board can influence the conduct of the technical testing and ensure the independence of the foundation and its testing. The charter of the foundation in annex clearly illustrates this red line.

### **A new identity**

An organisational detachment from the Danish Government calls for a new identity, and in order to distinguish our organisation from others we have developed a logo and the name 'TystofteFoundation'. Our website (<http://www.tystofte.dk/>) has been running since early July 2015 and we steadily develop it with new aspects as well as daily information.

### **Brave and proud staff**

From 1 July 2015, all employees were transferred from being civil servants to being employed by the private TystofteFoundation. Of course many were concerned about their jobs, but all employees, skilled and mostly with many years of experience in the field of variety testing, have actively and bravely cooperated on the development of the foundation. In many ways, we are proudly building our organisation ourselves.

### **New projects and partnerships**

Among many activities, the TystofteFoundation is part of the government-funded research project, 'Green Select', led by DLF and Aarhus University regarding phenotyping and the genomic selection of new varieties of herbaceous plants for future testing, approval and marketing. It is important for us to be part of these kinds of activities to develop our skills as well to develop and optimise our methods used for our testing.

### **Happy to receive the first applications**

In August and September 2015 we received new applications for the first time. Overall, the number of varieties in testing in 2016 is happily on the same level as in 2015, giving the foundation a smooth start and plenty of work.

### **Technical upgrade and expansion of testing area**

During the autumn of 2015, the TystofteFoundation invested in technical testing equipment such as a plot harvester and conventional agricultural machinery for the treatment of experimental areas. The foundation has acquired agriculture and experiment equipment for approximately 15 % of its annual turnover. The staff has received training in order to understand and handle the new and far more modern equipment. This technical update is very motivating, and we are all excited about the new opportunities. This investment is just the beginning to ensure state-of-the-art equipment in order to handle good plants for testing.

The TystofteFoundation has expanded the area of testing by 40 hectares. This gives the best possibilities of continuing to deliver good variety testing results to our customers. Finally, the premises of the foundation are under revision. New and modern offices and DUS laboratory buildings are on the drawing board, with inputs from the staff based on their experiences, and the whole project is followed with great interest by customers as well as stakeholders.

### **Strong cooperation with the CPVO**

The CPVO has followed our transformation from a governmental organisation to a private foundation with interest. The CPVO has also approved that the Danish CPVO entrustment has been transferred from the Danish AgriFish Agency to the TystofteFoundation regarding the DUS testing of the following species:

- wheat (spring and winter types),
- barley (spring and winter types),
- oil seed rape (spring and winter types),
- oats,
- beet (sugar and fodder ask),
- broad beans,
- festulolium, and
- quinoa.

The TystofteFoundation also still conducts DUS testing on behalf of non-domestic authorities (the CPVO and other national authorities).

### **Future activities**

Together with Aarhus University, we aim to create one of the world's most interesting seed-development clusters. The foundation is located in close proximity to Aarhus University's Institute of Agrobiolgy (seed research). With the new status of the TystofteFoundation, we expect to cooperate in research projects as well as exploit the cooperation's synergies on a daily level.

Our national seed certification has a potential future at the TystofteFoundation. At present our minister has to decide on the future organisation of our seed certification and the final decision is expected in autumn 2016.

### **Private governmental organisations**

Being an independent private unit opens up new possibilities for development. The process from thought to action is shorter and more targeted. We are pleased to have these possibilities and look optimistically towards our future — especially thanks to our skilled staff who enable us to provide high-quality testing at the right cost. It is also clear that every decision taken is a decision in the right direction. We believe we are now in a better position to handle the future demands from our customers on variety testing in the EU.

# Interface between the Danish AgriFish Agency and the TystofteFoundation

from the 1st of July 2016

