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By Maura Maxwell

Thursday 6th June 2019, 8:24 GMT

Grape breeders form new alliance

The Breeders' Alliance will tighten controls on illegal plantings worldwide



Four of the world's leading table grape breeding companies have formed a unique partnership to strengthen controls against illegal plantings of licensed varieties.

The Breeders' Alliance Co. Ltd was established last week by SNFL, IFG, Sun World Innovations and Arra to protect the interests of breeders, producers and retailers of protected varieties.

"Developing new varieties is expensive and time consuming and it is vital that illegal planting is minimised," SNFL's managing director Duncan Macintyre told delegates at Wednesday's Global Grape Summit in London, where the alliance was presented to delegates ahead of its official launch on Thursday.

"Breeders need to ensure that they get a return on investment, and producers cannot afford to see their neighbour grow the same licensed variety illegally."

Macintyre said that piracy also caused problems for retailers as rights holders have the power to take action against any party that infringes their license, including the seller.

The alliance will share intelligence on allegations of infringement and invest in retailer surveillance to curb illegal production and sales of licensed varieties.

The companies behind the initiative hope that it will encourage tighter national controls on illegal plantings.

"There are growers in many countries who don't have access to the best varieties because their governments haven't adopted the appropriate measures to protect breeders.

"This is about looking after our income stream so that we can reinvest it into varietal development, but most importantly, it's about protecting the growers who pay the royalties for our varieties," Macintyre said.