

NEWS RELEASE

Tom Francis Wins CSTA's Honourary Life Membership Award



Kelowna, B.C. Thursday July 8, 2010 – Dr. Tom Francis was recognized today for his contributions to the Canadian Seed Industry and to the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA); as a scientist, as a business development leader, as a role model and as a mentor. Dr. Francis is the 2010 recipient of CSTA's Honourary Life Membership Award.

The CSTA's Honourary Life Membership is presented annually to an individual, in honour of his or her significant volunteer contribution to the Canadian seed trade. This award recognizes and celebrates a life time of dedication and volunteer work for the seed industry in Canada and for the Canadian Seed Trade Association. It is well deserved by Tom Francis.

Dr. Francis began his career in seeds as a plant breeder, first with Agriculture Canada and then with Northrup King. He proved to be a skilled corn breeder and over a period of 14 years was involved in the development of more than 20 corn varieties, including Syngenta's Bt11, a variety genetically engineered to resist the corn borer.

According to his nominator: Dave Sippell of Syngenta Seeds: "One of Tom's strongest skills was the ability to link science with business. That proved very useful to seed companies as they went through major reorganization in the late 1990s and early 2000s. He was also a skilled navigator of regulatory systems, and has made significant contributions to the development of regulatory requirements for products of biotechnology."

Dr. Francis' contribution to the CSTA was also significant. In addition to chairing numerous CSTA committees and sitting as a Director on the CSTA Board for 10 years, Tom was CSTA's President in 2002/03. During his tenure on CSTA's Board, he spent three years as the Canadian Vice-President at the American Seed Trade Association.

While President of CSTA, he initiated activities designed to foster the participation of new members to the seed industry, and his activities eventually led to the creation of the Seed Mentorship Program. His commitment to developing human capital within the seed industry fostered the "Career in Seeds" program, the foundation of CSTA's work to introduce young people to the seed industry as a career..

Tom Francis received his award at the 87th annual meeting of the Canadian Seed Trade Association in Kelowna, B.C.

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Headquartered in the nation's capital, the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA) represents the interests of 132 corporate members engaged in all aspects of seed research, production and marketing, both domestically and internationally.