

NEWS RELEASE

CSTA Welcomes Variety Registration Amendments Urges Early Action on Crop Placement

Ottawa, Wednesday July 8, 2009 – “After many years of advocacy, consultation and debate, Canada finally has the framework in place for a more efficient, market responsive Variety Registration system but, according to the President of the Canadian Seed Trade Association, there is much to be done before there are real results for farmers and end users.

“On its own, the new regulatory system published in the Canada Gazette Part II today will not result in more timely registration of new varieties for farmers,” says Jeff Reid. “While the regulations establish a new three-part variety registration system, they don’t place major crop species, kinds or types within the different parts. So for most crops we still have the status quo and all the regulatory requirements that go with it.”

The new system divides Schedule III of the Seeds Regulations into three parts. Part 1 is the status quo. New varieties placed in Part 1 continue to require the recommendation of a recognized committee, and are subject to pre-registration trials overseen by the committee, to test for a number of criteria (merit). The new Part 2 will require the recommendation of a committee and evidence of testing, but not formal committee directed merit testing. New varieties in Part 3 will not require a recommendation or merit testing as described above.

Right now all but potatoes, safflower and sunflowers are in Part 1. It will take a regulatory amendment to move crops into one of the other parts. “Given that it took over a decade to get to this stage with the variety registration system, CSTA is quite concerned that it could be a very long time before we have a truly flexible variety registration system in place,” says Reid.

CSTA advocated for placement of crop species kinds and types within the new system as part of this regulatory package. “Specifically there is a need for forages to move out of Part 1, says Reid. “For many forage crops and types there are no resources to bring together a recommending committee or to conduct extensive pre-registration merit trials. The result is that very few new forage varieties are made available to Canadian farmers.”

CSTA hopes that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency will move quickly to place the crop species, kinds and types in Schedule III within the new framework. “It has to happen quickly in order for the new system to be effective,” says Reid.

CSTA also strongly insists that crops not currently listed in Schedule III must remain outside of the variety registration system. “Crops like seed corn, turf grass and some soybean types have evolved their own systems which allow for efficient introduction of new and improved varieties, while still providing the information that farmers need,” says Reid. “The approaches for these crops work well, and should remain. If it isn’t broken, there is no need to try to fix it.”

-csta-

For Information: Patty Townsend, CSTA Vice-President
Bus Tel: 613-829-9527
Cell: 613-277-0622

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.