



CANADIAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION

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THE FUTURE OF REGULATING THE SEED INDUSTRY

POSITION PAPER

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The seed industry is a well developed business where leading research and development companies work through retailers to serve sophisticated customers. The current Seeds Act does not adequately reflect the reality of today's agriculture sector. To better meet the needs of modern agriculture, CSTA believes the following steps should be taken:

1) GOALS OF SEED LEGISLATION

The Seeds Act governs all aspects of producing and marketing seed in Canada and the CSTA members recognize the vital role it plays in the industry. To sustain its role in the future, the CSTA believes the Seeds Act should focus on two key functions:

- to facilitate certification that fosters niche market value chains in addition to the traditional commodity supply chain
- to maintain adequate standards to facilitate international trade

This means the legislation would focus on authorizing certification and grading seed. Mechanisms need to be flexible to allow for evolving science.

Recognizing the valuable role of CFIA, the industry believes the governing principles of any reassessment of the Seeds Act and regulations should be:

- The Act and regulations should set the minimum standards needed for trade and the market should be allowed to establish additional requirements based on market needs.
- Use of accreditation, quality systems, and codes of practice can be used to implement many programs.
- Consumer protection functions need not necessarily be part of Seeds Act legislation as truth in labelling and other mechanisms deserve exploration.
- Regulatory mechanisms, such as variety registration, should be enabled in legislation so that industries can implement them where needed rather than mandating them for all crops.

2) REVIEW OF SEED, FEED, AND GRAINS ACTS

The legislation, which governs crops from their creation through to their delivery, is not seamless. Currently differences between the legislation and regulation of crops from seed to end use product actually impede the ability of the industry to sustain value-added chains, since there is no link between varieties established as seed and varieties in the grain delivery channel. It is time to look at the inconsistencies across the Seed, Feed and Grains Acts. A study must be conducted to assess the ways in which these pieces of legislation can be integrated to better accommodate the increased use of identity-preserved systems, traceability, and food safety.