

# AFFIDAVIT SYSTEMS

## A POSITION PAPER OF THE CANADIAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION

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Traceability, food safety and limiting liability have been a focus in all agricultural sectors. Many in the grains and oilseeds industry, including researchers, producers, handlers and processors, are familiar with procedures to preserve value-added traits. A system that enables traceability provides safety as well as quality benefits. These approaches all involve increased segregation and record keeping.

The Canadian seed industry has a great deal of experience in producing, marketing and preserving products of known identity. This includes supporting a viable grain handling system that can deliver traceability. We encourage honesty in grain delivery and handling and we support a regulatory framework that promotes accountability and responsibility on the part of all players. And furthermore, we support value chains and recognize the ongoing need for industry to work together to develop further systems to ensure the integrity of the entire commodity system.

Variety names are increasingly being used in identifying end use characteristics in addition to their indication of agronomic traits. Misuse or misrepresentation of a variety name can and does damage the value of that variety name in these end use markets. The misuse or misrepresentation of grain shipments or grain based products must be stopped.

Using pedigreed seed is the only practical and legal means to access a particular variety. A legal opinion obtained by CSTA confirms the reality that only crops planted with pedigreed seed can be identified by a variety name in the grain handling and processing system. It is equally important that industry stakeholders fully understand the value delivered through certified seed as well as the role certified seed plays as a risk management tool.

The Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) has been working on a system that would be an alternative to kernel visual distinguishability (KVD). The present proposal involves the use of an affidavit signed by producers for identifying grain entering the system. The CSTA has concerns with many of the unknown facets of the affidavit proposal, but we are supportive of the move away from KVD and are willing to discuss with the industry the best methods to bring about this change.

The CSTA believes that an effective affidavit system must have proof of pedigreed seed usage as a requirement when the end product is destined to be sold by variety name. We recommend the use of certified seed as the basis of good operating practices to ensure product integrity and reduce liability. We recognize the concerns of industry stakeholders with mandating the use of certified seed. Where products are to be sold by "class", the CSTA supports a middle ground position of not requiring the crop to have been planted with certified seed. However, the grower must be able to prove the purchase of certified seed of that variety in recent years. In cases where the grain handler or processor is claiming the grain is identity-preserved, the requirement for the use of pedigreed seed must be complete.

The trend towards increased traceability in the grains and oilseeds industry involves increased segregation and will likely lead to producer declaration/affidavit systems. It is imperative that the grains and oilseeds industry work together with the seed industry to develop a system that is a framework for success – a system that is truthful, law abiding, ensures product integrity, adds value and reduces liability. This is the only way to ensure the continuance of a safe and competitive Canadian food production and handling system.