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**SEED INDUSTRY SUPPORTS FARMER'S ABILITY TO SAVE
AND PLANT SEED**

NOVEMBER 25, 2004 – OTTAWA – The Canadian Seed Trade Association urges the Government of Canada to move forward with amendments to its Plant Breeders' Rights legislation, which will enshrine a farmer's ability to save seed.

"It is a misconception that the seed industry opposes a farmer's opportunity to replant seed on his or her own farm under Plant Breeders' Rights," says Bill Leask, Executive Vice-President of CSTA. "We have always advocated for a balance of farmers' and breeders' rights under the legislation. That's been the case from the time PBR was introduced in the late 1980s, through potential amendments in the 1990s, and now as we hope to have amendments finally move forward."

The proposed amendments suggest that the PBR legislation actually state a farmer has the ability to replant seed on his/her own farm. The current PBR Act is completely silent on this point. The CSTA supports this privilege be enshrined and hopes to work with farm groups to further clarify how this will operate for the mutual benefit and success of farmers and the seed industry.

"The seed industry can only succeed when the farm industry succeeds and any attempt to suggest otherwise ignores the fact that farmers are the purchasers of seed and seed companies grow plants to produce their product – just like farmers," says Leask. "We know what it is like to be affected by bad weather, crop disease, and other challenges. It is the job of the industry to improve plants to meet those challenges and move beyond them into the realm of value-added products for specialty markets."

CSTA represents 150 companies and institutions engaged in the breeding and production of seed and related technologies. While a few are large seed companies operating in many countries around the world, the overwhelming majority are small to medium-sized Canadian companies serving both domestic and international markets. With an annual investment of nearly \$100 million in breeding, these companies are responsible for a significant proportion of total Canadian plant research. On top of that, CSTA members like SeCan return millions of dollars in breeder royalties to public breeding programs.

"The work of these highly skilled plant breeders and the financial investment they've made in their research programs must be recognized and appropriately rewarded, or plant improvements will dry up," says Leask. He adds that PBR is a mechanism in which unique varieties can be protected and unauthorized sales, so-called 'brown bag' sales, can be curtailed.

The goal of the currently proposed amendments is to align the PBR Act to meet international standards (set out in the 1991 agreement of Union for the Protection of Plant Varieties - UPOV) in a manner that fosters research and competitiveness to the benefit of all.

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