



JAN 20 2012

Quote: 170561

Ms. Patty Townsend and Co-Signatories  
Canadian Seed Trade Association  
505-39 Robertson Road  
Ottawa, Ontario K2H 8R2

[ptownsend@cdnseed.org](mailto:ptownsend@cdnseed.org)

Dear Ms. Townsend and Co-Signatories:

Thank you for your letter in which you and other officials from different agricultural associations request that the Government of Canada move forward with regulatory amendments to the variety registration system for oilseed type soybeans.

The Government of Canada believes that innovation is important for the future prosperity of the agriculture and agri-food sector, and please be assured that I understand the importance for the Canadian soybean industry in accessing new soybean varieties more rapidly.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada currently supports eleven value chain roundtables, which are mechanisms designed to foster effective industry-government action that helps to develop a competitive agriculture and agri-food sector and to achieve market success.

During 2011, the Department recognized the need of the seed sector to have its own roundtable in order to advance work on seed regulatory and policy issues. I recognize that the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA) was instrumental in establishing the Seed Sector Value Chain Roundtable (VCRT). An important part of the Roundtable's mandate will be to manage a significant seed regulatory modernization agenda in the years ahead.

The Seed Sector VCRT held its inaugural meeting on December 13 and 14, 2011, and, as you are aware, the implementation of a responsive and proactive variety registration system was identified as a priority issue. The Roundtable will take on different roles, including encouraging co-operation, monitoring the work to identify gaps, and seeking to implement a more flexible variety registration system. For instance, the Roundtable could rapidly complete the necessary

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dialogue with the forage sector to address its concerns with crop placements in the new variety registration system.


The CSTA was instrumental in organizing consultations among stakeholders. These consultations demonstrated that there is a rationale and a strong level of stakeholder consensus across the value chain for the amendments. The Government of Canada appreciates the significant time invested by the CSTA in recent years in engaging the entire seed value chain on this issue.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) recognizes that this is a priority for the seed sector. The Agency is finalizing the drafting of the regulatory amendment and anticipates moving a regulatory proposal through the formal process in the near future.

The CFIA is committed to advancing regulatory proposals for changes to the registration requirements for additional crops as the rationale and consensus for change are established. I encourage you and other seed sector stakeholders to continue to work with the Agency regarding changes in variety registration requirements for subsequent crops and any other areas of interest.

I trust that this information is of assistance. Again, thank you for writing regarding this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Ritz", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerry Ritz, PC, MP