

December 12, 2011

Honourable Gerry Ritz
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
House of Commons
Parliament Hill
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Fax: (Hill) 613-996-8472 Fax: (Dept) 613-773-1060

Dear Minister Ritz:

The undersigned organizations have joined together to ask that the Government of Canada move forward as soon as possible with regulatory amendments to the variety registration system for oilseed type soybeans.

Since regulations to create a three-part variety registration system were published in the Canada Gazette Part II in June, 2009 (*after over 10 years of consultation*), it has been acknowledged by both regulators and soybean value chain stakeholders that the current system isn't working for this crop type. In order to facilitate the introduction of new varieties, oilseed type soybeans need to move into Part III of the system.

Industry assisted CFIA to prepare the rationale for the regulatory changes required to move oilseed type soybeans into Part III. We organized consultations and demonstrated value chain support for the moves. We have been told on a number of occasions that all of the work has been done to effect the regulatory changes. However, we have yet to see a regulatory package published in the Canada Gazette at any stage.

This is very frustrating for those of us who are involved with these crop kinds. Producers need access to new, improved varieties and the industry is able and willing to deliver them, however we continue to wait for the establishment of a regulatory system that will facilitate their introduction.

Many soybean producers are also corn producers. As you know, corn is not subject to registration and as a result, new varieties are more quickly delivered to farmers. These producers would like to have the same kind of access to new varieties of soybeans in order to capture the opportunities presented by a rapidly changing marketplace.

We have been assured that this is a relatively simple regulatory change, and we have demonstrated that the soybean value chain is supportive of the move. Flexibility in the regulatory system is critical to ensure that Canadian farmers have access on a timely basis to plant varieties that will place them ahead of their competitors in the international market.

We urge you to make this regulatory change a priority, and hope to see it published in the Canada Gazette in the very near future.

Respectfully Submitted:



Association des Marchands de Semences du Québec



Canadian Seed Trade Association



Canadian Soybean Exporters' Association



Manitoba Pulse Growers Association



Ontario Oil and Protein Seed Crop Committee

c.c George Da Pont, President, Canadian Food Inspection Agency
 Tony Ritchie, Executive Director, Plant Health and Biosafety Directorate, CFIA
 Brian Lemon, Director, Field Crops Division CFIA
 Mark Forhan, Variety Registration, CFIA