

STRONG FOUNDATION. BRIGHT FUTURE.

Main Administrator

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BACKGROUND

Seed certification in Canada relies on a longstanding public-private partnership between the CFIA and CSGA, enabled by CSGA's delegated authority under the Seeds Act and Regulations. This means that, unlike most countries, Canada's seed certification is split between seed crop certification (field standards) and seed certification (seed standards).

As a not-for-profit, independent third party, CSGA is responsible for varietal purity standards for all crop kinds (except potatoes), seed crop certification and certification of Breeder and Select class seed. Meanwhile, CFIA oversees crop inspections, system compliance and certification standards for Foundation, Registered and Certified class seed.

WHAT'S NEXT

As the sector works together to modernize our seed system, we need to prioritize a simpler certification process that comes from the consolidation and streamlining of our current multi-layered, complicated system.

OUR PLAN

The future of our seed sector is an industry-led, government-enabled seed certification system with **CSGA as the main administrator** through a digital single window managing all seed certification functions on behalf of government.

MAIN ADMINISTRATOR

Consolidating the services provided by CFIA and CSGA and rendering CSGA the main administrator would result in a simpler certification process:

- Eliminating regulatory & administrative disconnect
- Removing information gaps
- Creating streamlined, agile processes for certification
- Reinforcing continuous improvement & technology adoption
- Prioritizing user experience
- Maintaining quality, trust and genetic identity assurance
- Retaining government oversight

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Practically speaking, the process would be relatively straightforward. Upon agreement between the CFIA and CSGA, administrative work will be outsourced to the CSGA. However, the CFIA needs to remain the overall regulatory authority for seed and seed certification in Canada.

As such, CSGA would provide the CFIA with the tools required to effectively and efficiently oversee Canada's seed certification system. This would include additional responsibilities, such as:

- Providing a digital seed certification platform to administer and oversee domestic and OECD certification of seed.

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- Being the main point of contact for all questions on seed certification operations.
- Administering official labels, including licenses to print.
- Reviewing the results of variety verification testing, RSE and lab audits and providing the CFIA with corrective action recommendations.

Shifting its focus from the day-to-day administration of seed certification, the CFIA can review where its seed regulatory efforts would have the greatest positive impact – preferably in the areas of science, enforcement, and international coordination.

The CFIA would continue its system oversight responsibility, administering Canada’s variety registration and verification programs and representing Canada as its National Designated Authority at the OECD Seed Schemes.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Outside of the day-to-day administration of seed certification, there are a few other considerations when considering the past division of responsibility between CFIA and CSGA.

Field Inspection Training: CSGA will work with the ASCIS Association to develop crop inspection training tools and administer online training for seed crop inspectors. The CFIA would still license these inspectors and conduct the in-field practical examinations.

OECD Certification: CSGA would manage the day-to-day administration of the OECD Seed Schemes, including assigning the OECD reference number, coordinating sample submission and testing, and the issuance of varietal certificates. This arrangement would be similar to the agreement that the USDA has with AOSCA agencies. The CFIA would still be the National Designated Authority at the OECD Seed Schemes.

People: To achieve this future framework, CSGA would need to increase its current staff complement of 13 full-time staff. As a remote office organization, most new CSGA staff could work in the regions that they serve. CSGA is open to onboarding current employees of the CFIA, like the French SEMAE SOC model.

Funding: CSGA currently charges most fees upfront (acreage fee and membership dues) before the seed is sold and the value of seed certification is actually realized. CSGA would like to transition towards a fee model based on the tonnage of seed certified and the number of tags issued. This change would allow CSGA to take a holistic approach to seed certification assessments and mirror what is done in almost all other jurisdictions. Minor acreage assessment fees would be charged to ensure a minimum service fee is recouped for service performed.

INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

Mature seed sectors globally have transferred most day-to-day administration of seed certification to a non-government entity. Notable examples include:

- NAK (Netherlands)
- NIAB (England)
- SEMAE (France)
- SANSOR (South Africa)