



March 2026

## Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Variety Verification Program

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) oversees Canada's seed certification system to ensure seed quality and varietal purity. A key component is the **Variety Verification Program**, which serves as a quality check to confirm varietal identity and purity to maintain the integrity of the seed certification process.

### How the Variety Verification Program Works

Growers, inspectors, seed companies or Registered Seed Establishments submit seed samples from all pedigreed seed classes. The program confirms that varieties are correctly identified early in the multiplication process which helps detect issues while seed quantities are small and preventing larger problems later.

### Seed Grower Requirements to Complete Plot Certification

Growers producing Probation, Select, Foundation (for open-pollinated crops) plots **must**:

- Submit a seed sample to the CFIA Ottawa Laboratory (Fallowfield)

### Testing & Assessment Process

Each year, the CFIA Ottawa Laboratory sows submitted samples alongside a reference control plot grown from breeder seed. Throughout the growing season, CFIA Seed Science Unit technicians compare sample plots against the reference control plot and the official variety description assessing off-types, and potential varietal identity concerns.

### 2025 Field Season

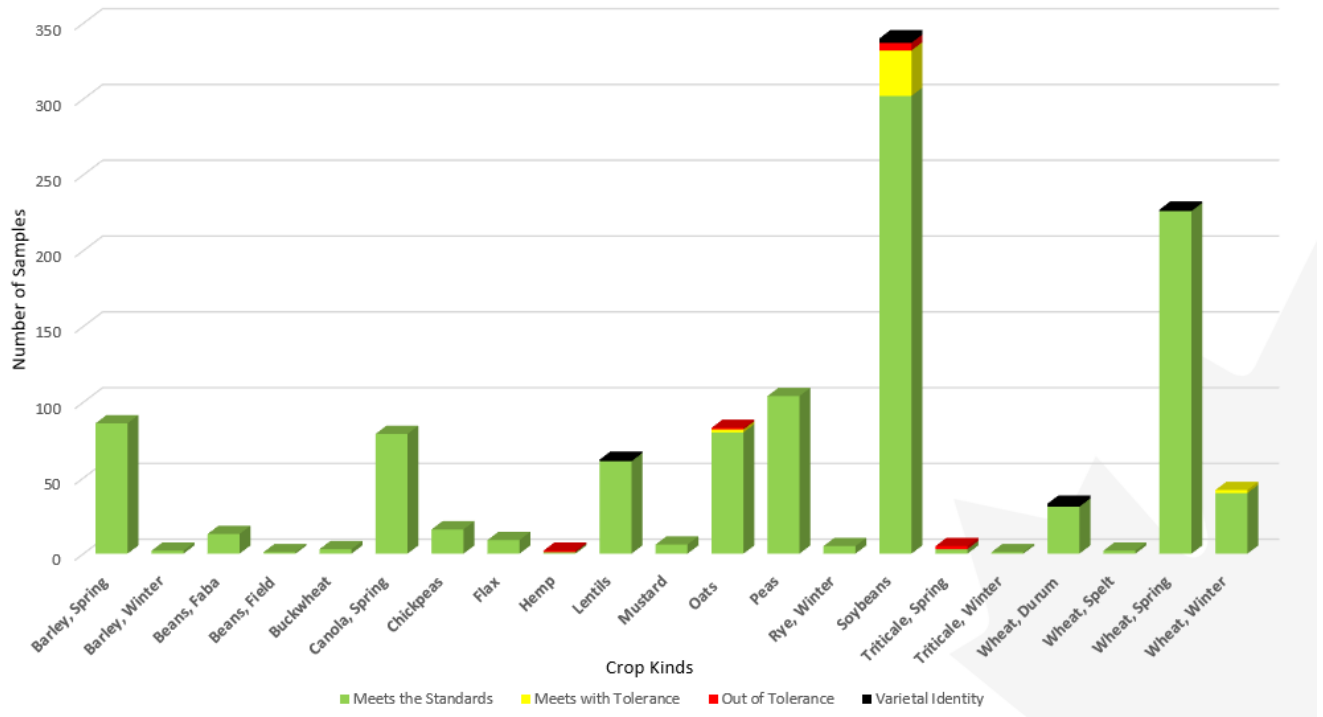
The accompanying graph shows the number of domestic seed samples tested in the 2025 field season, demonstrating the program's scope. For plots with results out of tolerance or with varietal identity discrepancies, root cause analyses were conducted. **Note: all varietal identity issues resolved to date were a result of sample mislabelling by sample submitters.**

### Key Takeaway

Accurate and representative sample submission is essential for assessing varietal purity and supporting the integrity of Canada's seed certification system.



### 2025 Variety Verification Program - Domestic Summary



To learn more, the CFIA has provided a Q&A Variety Verification Program webpage at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/Q-A-Variety-Verification>