



March 2024

Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Variety Verification Program

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is responsible for the oversight of the seed certification system in Canada. The Variety Verification Program, administered by the CFIA, is an essential component and provides a quality check on Canada's seed certification system.

Seed samples used to assess varietal purity and varietal identity are submitted by growers, CFIA inspectors, and in some cases by seed companies or Registered Seed Establishments. Samples for Variety Verification testing are from seed lots of all pedigreed classes, and includes domestic seed, seed imported into Canada, and OECD seed exported from Canada.

The Variety Verification Program ensures varieties are what they claim to be and capture potential issues at the beginning of the seed multiplication process. It identifies potential issues of higher generations where seed quantities are still small and allows for appropriate action to be taken where necessary to avoid more significant downstream issues.

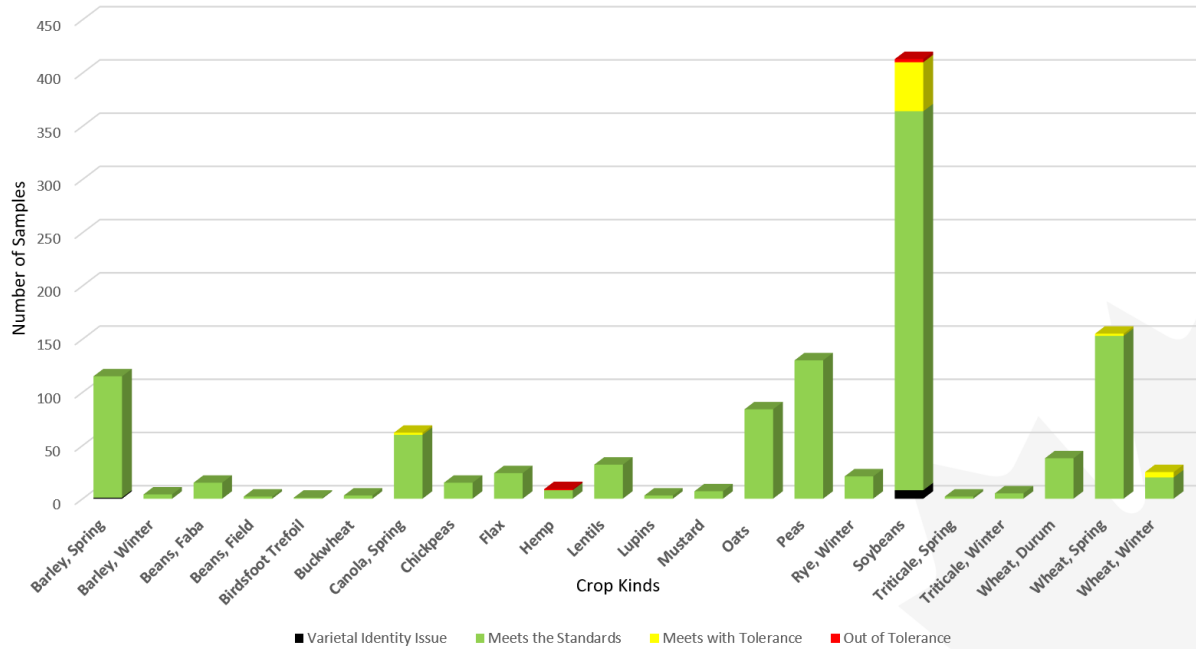
Growers producing Select, Foundation, and Probation plots **must** submit a seed sample and a Report on Plot Production ([CSGA's Form 50](#)) to complete the certification of their plots. The Form 50 is submitted directly to the CSGA, while the seed sample is sent directly to the CFIA Fallowfield Laboratory.

Every year, the CFIA Fallowfield Laboratory in Ottawa sows these samples in variety verification plots alongside a reference control plot of the same variety. The reference control plot is sown with breeder seed that was submitted with the registration application of that specific variety. Throughout the growing season, CFIA staff will assess each variety verification plot and visually compare it to the control plot and official variety description to identify off-types, variants, and potential varietal identity issues. Growers will receive a result letter when a varietal purity or identity discrepancy has been identified and a recommendation for follow up actions where appropriate. The purpose is to help seed producers identify issues before it is passed further down the system.

The following graph summarizes the number of domestic seed samples provided by seed growers that were tested in the variety verification plots over the 2023 field season. It portrays the depth and breadth of the variety verification program. The bar lines show how many samples: met standards, met standards with an applied tolerance added, and were out of tolerance and which plots indicated a varietal identity issue. Plots that are out of tolerance or had varietal identity issues were reviewed to determine the root cause. It is an important reminder to take care when providing and submitting variety verification samples to ensure the quality and integrity is true to the seed lot that is being sampled.



2023 Variety Verification Program – CSGA Grower Summary



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