

Fall 2026 Standards Consultation

Recognition of Plant Breeders, Breeder Quality Management Systems, and Crop Inspection of Breeder Seed Plots

Current status: Open

This consultation period opened on September 14, 2026, and will close at 5 p.m. ET on November 9, 2026.

About the consultation

Focus of Consultation:

- Portions of Sections 1, 2, & 3 of the [Canadian Breeder Seed Requirements](#)
- Sections 1.1 & 1.2 Recognition of Plant Breeders
- Section 2.4 Quality Management System
- Section 3.3 Crop Inspection

Purpose of the Consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to obtain stakeholder feedback on CSGA's proposed revisions to the *Canadian Breeder Seed Requirements* (CBSR) relating to:

1. The criteria for recognition of plant breeders; and
2. Quality Management System (QMS) requirements for Breeder seed production, including authorization to conduct crop inspections of Breeder seed plots.

Part 1 – Recognition of Plant Breeders

Issue

The current recognition criteria do not adequately reflect the range of educational pathways now available to individuals pursuing careers in plant breeding. While university degrees are recognized, agricultural diplomas and specialized certificate programs are not explicitly considered, even where they may provide equivalent education and training.

The current criteria also provide limited guidance on how practical experience should be weighed relative to formal education. In addition, clarification is needed regarding the supervision requirements for on-the-job training and the recognition of equivalent plant breeder credentials in countries participating in the OECD Seed Schemes.

Background

The Recognition of Plant Breeders section of the CBSR establishes the requirements for CSGA's peer-reviewed program for recognizing plant breeders. It outlines the available recognition categories and the qualifications required for each.

A CSGA-Recognized Plant Breeder (RPB) is a fully qualified plant breeder authorized to undertake activities and complete documentation related to Breeder seed production, Breeder seed approval, and variety certification eligibility.

Considerations

Applicants for recognition must possess appropriate academic qualifications and relevant practical experience. Current requirements reference university-level credentials but do not explicitly recognize other forms of formal education, such as agricultural diplomas or specialized certificate programs, that may provide comparable training.

Similarly, the relative importance of practical experience and formal education is not clearly defined. Some candidates may possess extensive experience working under the supervision of a recognized plant breeder but may not meet existing educational requirements.

Part 2 – Breeder QMS Requirements and Oversight of Breeder Seed Production

Issue

The effectiveness and value of the current QMS requirements—particularly the mandatory independent third-party audit component—have been questioned by stakeholders. The audit requirement has also proven challenging to administer and may not represent the most effective approach for managing risk and ensuring compliance.

Alternative oversight mechanisms may provide greater flexibility while continuing to support the integrity of Breeder seed production.

Background

The CBSR currently requires that Breeder seed crops certified by CSGA be produced within a documented Quality Management System (QMS). In addition to meeting CBSR requirements, the QMS must address the certification requirements set out in the [Canadian Regulations and Procedures for Pedigreed Seed Crop Production](#) (Circular 6).

The QMS must be audited at least once every five years by a qualified, independent third-party auditor.

Considerations

CSGA has required plant breeders to operate within a QMS framework for nearly twenty years. The current approach includes two key elements:

- Maintaining documented procedures; and
- Verification through periodic third-party audits.

The QMS must address all aspects of pedigreed seed production relevant to CSGA requirements, including activities, documents, and records identified in the [CSGA Assessment Checklist](#). However, Breeder seed production encompasses a wide range of breeding programs and production systems. Historically, recognized plant breeders and auditors have been relied upon to determine which elements are most relevant for review within a given breeding program.

Third-party audits can be costly and are conducted in an environment where specialized training in Breeder seed QMS auditing is limited. Currently, only one auditor is also a CSGA-Recognized Plant Breeder. As a result, auditors may not always possess the technical expertise necessary to consistently identify meaningful risks, gaps, or opportunities for improvement. This can reduce the overall value of the audit process beyond basic compliance verification.

Progress To Date – What We Heard So Far

These issues have been discussed extensively by CSGA's Plant Breeders Committee. Committee members expressed unanimous support for:

- Updating plant breeder recognition criteria to better reflect current educational pathways in plant breeding; and
- Providing greater flexibility in the oversight of Breeder seed production while maintaining the integrity of the certification system.

The Plant Breeders Committee's recommendations were subsequently approved by the CSGA Board of Directors for stakeholder consultation.

Proposal

Recognition of Plant Breeders

CSGA proposes revising the CBSR to:

1. Recognize certain diploma and certificate programs as equivalent to an M.Sc. in Plant Breeding, including successful completion of the UC Davis Plant Breeding Academy.
2. Clarify that required on-the-job training must be completed under the supervision of a CSGA-Recognized Plant Breeder, including individuals holding equivalent recognition in countries participating in the OECD Seed Schemes.

Breeder QMS Requirements and Oversight

CSGA proposes revising the CBSR to provide greater flexibility in the oversight of Breeder seed production. Under the proposed approach:

1. Plant breeders would be responsible for maintaining documented procedures and determining whether those procedures adequately preserve varietal identity, varietal purity, and mechanical (species) purity. Plant breeders would also be responsible for ensuring personnel are appropriately trained and that procedures are consistently followed.
2. CSGA would develop and make available guidance documents to support compliance with Breeder seed production requirements.
3. Where a Breeder seed plot is not inspected by an authorized third party, the plant breeder – or an individual designated and supervised by the breeder – would prepare a crop report for that plot.

The **revised document showing all proposed revisions** [can be found here](#).

Who is the focus of this consultation?

This consultation will be of interest to those involved in the seed sector value chain, including but not limited to:

- Plant breeders
- Seed growers
- Crop certificate assignees and seed companies contracting pedigreed seed production
- Registered seed establishments (RSEs) that process pedigreed seed
- Seed analysts
- Authorized seed crop inspection services (ASCIS) and licensed seed crop inspectors (LSCI)
- Agriculture organizations, including councils, associations, and commissions with an interest in pedigreed seed production

CSGA also welcomes feedback from the broader Canadian agriculture sector and other interested organizations or individuals.

How to Participate

Written comments may be submitted by email to [Mike Scheffel](#) and [Gail Harris](#) with the subject line:

Breeder Seed Requirements Consultation

Please provide your feedback no later than **5:00 pm ET, November 9, 2026**.

Consultation Activities

CSGA will inform stakeholders about the consultation through:

- this webpage,
- announcements in the *Seed Scoop* newsletter, and
- direct outreach to key stakeholders.

Upon request, CSGA staff will meet with stakeholders and interested parties.

Next steps

CSGA will review feedback received during the consultation period and provide a report to the Regulatory Services Committee in late November 2026.

The RSC will then make recommendations to the CSGA Board of Directors regarding next steps.

Related Information

- [Canadian Breeder Seed Requirements](#)
- [CSGA Breeder Seed Webpage](#)
- [Canadian Regulations and Procedures for Pedigreed Seed Crop Production](#)
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Seed Program Documents
 - [Specific work instructions \(SWI 142.1.1\): Pedigreed seed crop inspection](#)

We also invite stakeholders to learn more about [CSGA's standard development process](#).

Contact Us

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