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**CANADIAN SEED INSTITUTE**  
**GRADE TABLES REVIEW WORKSHOP**  
**'SCOPING THE ISSUES'**

**MEETING REPORT**

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**OCTOBER 30, 2008**  
**OTTAWA, ONTARIO**

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## 1. WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

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The Canadian Seed Institute (CSI) convened a working group meeting on October 30, 2008 in Ottawa to scope the issues related to Canada's seed grading system. There were 23 participants, representing the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), the Canadian Seed Growers' Association (CSGA), the CSI, the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA), the Commercial Seed Analysts Association of Canada (CSAAC), and the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC).

*The objectives of the meeting were:*

- To identify potential options for change
  - For improving the current seed grading system, and
  - For amending specific seed standards; and
- To identify the next steps in the path forward.

The meeting was funded by the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-food Fund (ACAAF) of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, stemming from a successful application by the CSTA, the CSGA and the CSI to ACAAFF to make possible policy work under the National Forum on Seed (NFS), as well as technical work such as this working group meeting.

This report summarizes the discussions that took place during the workshop.

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## 2. CONTEXT

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Meeting facilitator Warren Wilson provided a brief recap of the previous day's consultation workshop on the Weed Seeds Order (WSO). This provided important context for the meeting because weed seeds are regulated in the *Seeds Regulations*, including the Grade Tables, in the current seed grading system.

### **PRESENTATION "Purpose and Process For Review" - Willy Drost, CFIA**

Ms. Drost from the CFIA's Seed Section provided a brief history of Canada's seed grading system and seed standards, and discussed the relevant objectives in the CFIA Seed Program's Strategic Action Plan. No significant changes have been made to the grading system itself in the last 20 years. In order to make significant changes to the grading system, broad consultation with stakeholders is required; this workshop is the beginning of these focused consultations.

The CFIA Seed Section's Strategic Action Plan includes the goal of completing of a review and update of purity and germination standards and other requirements in Schedule I of the *Seeds Regulations* (the Regulations) by March 2010. In addition, the

Plan includes the goal of simplifying the grading system (e.g. reduction of number of grade names in Schedule I) by September 2011. The Strategic Action Plan is based on regional and national, internal and external consultations carried out in 2006/2007 under the Seed Program Modernization Initiative.

In August 2008, a CFIA Seed Section 'Call for Issues' was distributed to targeted stakeholders (CSI, CSGA, CSTA, and CSAAC) to identify issues with the Canadian seed grading system and the seed standards, and to solicit suggestions for improvements. This current technical working group workshop was aimed at reviewing issues identified in previous consultations and the 'Call for Issues', and at identifying potential options for change to improve the Canadian seed grading system and to amend specific standards as required.

During the winter of 2008/2009, feedback from this workshop will be incorporated into a CFIA options paper to streamline the seed grading system. It is proposed that in February 2009 another technical working group meeting be convened to review the CFIA options paper and to provide feedback that will be incorporated into public consultation documents aimed at developing consensus for regulatory amendments.

### **PRESENTATION "Canada's Seed Grading System" - Michael Scheffel, CFIA**

Mr. Scheffel set out the key elements in Canada's seed grading system. The purpose of Canada's seed grading system is:

- To establish minimum standards for seeds;
- To convey information to consumers in a simple fashion (i.e. grade names); and
- To present the standards in a comprehensive format (i.e. Grade Tables).

In addition, Canada pedigreed grade names are seed certification statements that represent a process throughout which verification of pedigreed status and seed standards occurs at multiple stages.

The Grade Tables in Schedule I to the Regulations set out the minimum standards for weed seeds, other crop seeds, some seed borne diseases, and germination. Section 7 of the Regulations sets out additional seed standards, prescriptions and allowances such as 'seed shall not contain prohibited noxious weed seeds' and 'seed with pedigreed grade names must be of pedigreed status'.

In the current seed grading system, 186 crop kinds are grouped into 22 Grade Tables according to seed size, similarities with respect to potential seed contaminants, and intended use. Seed of crop kinds not listed in the Grade Tables must meet minimum weed seed and other crop seed standards of the appropriate Grade Table based on seed size of that crop kind; standards for germination and seed borne diseases do not apply to these crop kinds and they may not be sold by grade name since not all of the standards applicable to the grade name will have been tested for.

Grade names are a combination of pedigreed status (determined by the cycle of seed multiplication and application of CSGA's varietal purity standards to crop inspection results) and numerical grade (determined by analysis of seed samples for seed quality characteristics). This has resulted in a large number of unique grade names and associated seed standards, making the grading system somewhat complicated; CFIA is looking for ways to simplify the system. In the current system, there are a total of 36 grade names including 17 pedigreed grade names and 10 non-pedigreed grade names.

Prior to sale, all Canada pedigreed seed must be:

- processed by an Approved Conditioner or by the grower of the seed on his/her own premises;
- tested for mechanical purity by an accredited grader or seed analyst;
- tested for germination by an officially recognized laboratory;
- graded by an accredited grader; and
- labelled according to the Regulations.

In terms of application of grade names, anyone may apply non-pedigreed names to non-pedigreed seed. However, only accredited graders may apply the Canada pedigreed grade name to seed.

Mr. Scheffel closed by adding some historical perspective with respect to the timing of this current review of the grading system and the associated standards. The grading system was established at a time in history when farmers and seed growers did not possess significant technical knowledge of seed quality issues. As such, the establishment and subsequent use of grade names provided sufficient confidence (regarding the quality of the seed) to those who used the grade names. Today, farmers and seed growers are more knowledgeable and educated, able to understand the specific standards, and are interested in information beyond just the grade name. Also of note is that the grading system was established at a time when most varieties were developed by public breeding programs; today, many private breeding programs exist and breeding by public institutions has declined.

## **DISCUSSION**

There was general agreement during the discussion that communicating information to seed buyers in a simple way is a major objective of the current system and should be of any future system as well.

A participant questioned whether the grading system is still the best way to accomplish conveyance of seed quality information to the buyers of seed. Today's educated seed buyers are looking for more seed quality information regarding the seed they are purchasing. According to some participants, seed analysis certificates are often requested by buyers even though the grade is already known to them. Perhaps buyers feel that reading the seed analysis reports is actually easier than understanding what the grade means.

Another issue of significant importance that was discussed was that anyone can apply grade names to non-pedigreed seed while only accredited graders may apply the Canada pedigreed grade name. There were general concerns expressed regarding the quality of non-pedigreed seed. When asked whether CFIA has in place a monitoring program for common seed and whether compliance actions are taken when non-compliance is observed, Mr. Scheffel answered that the compliance rate for the marketplace monitoring program for common seed is approximately 75% without applying tolerances and 85% when tolerances are applied. This raises questions as to whether growers of common seed should be allowed to grade common seed.

The time at which the germination test is carried out was another area of discussion. A germination sample taken from the bin could lead to a different germination result than one taken from the final product; germination may decline significantly during or after processing. Mr. Scheffel explained that the quality and germination standards must be met at the sale of the seed. The onus is on the vendor to ensure that the seed meets the standards at the time of sale. To be absolutely certain that the seed still meets the germination standard at the time of sale, vendors could retest the germination before selling the seed.

Mr. Leask (CSTA) explained that the time of germination testing presents a logistical problem. Generally, seed tags are printed prior to completion of the seed analysis tests and seed bags are labelled and sealed prior to this as well. It was also pointed out that the seed may be sold several months after the tests for application of the grade were carried out and by that time, germination may have decreased during storage. In this case, initial germination results may not be the same as the actual germination potential of the seed at the time of sale. This may lead to non-compliance with the seed standards. CFIA reiterated that the vendor is responsible for grade standards being met at the time of sale. There were suggestions that conditioners should have education or stewardship programs to educate buyers to better understand germination testing and the issues discussed above.

It was pointed out by some participants that often times seed lots are on consignment with the vendors; in these cases, who is responsible for ensuring that the seed quality standards are met at the time of sale? Mr. Leask (CSTA) explained different scenarios in this regard: if a company's trademark remains on the seed, the company would be concerned about the seed meeting the standards but if the seed is repackaged under a different brand, the initial company would not likely be willing to take responsibility for ensuring the standards are met. The CFIA's Seed Section committed to seeking CFIA Legal Advice on the issue of who is legally considered the vendor of the seed when it is under consignment.

Quality control at the retail level was also discussed. While conditioners, samplers and graders are accredited, retailers are not required to have a quality management system. It was suggested that the CSTA could address this issue by not consigning seed to retailers with bad records and to ensure there is no carryover at the retail level at the end of a selling season.

In response to a question regarding mobile conditioners, Mr. Scheffel responded that 'processing of pedigreed seed by the grower on his/her own premises' does not include bringing a mobile conditioner to the premises. Mr. Scheffel acknowledged that it is difficult to monitor that processing is occurring on the grower's own premises as a grower's property may extend over a large area and property may be shared among family members and/or growers.

In summary,

- The group concluded that the purpose of Canada's seed grading system should be:
  - To establish minimum standards for seeds;
  - To convey information to consumers in a simple fashion; and
  - To present the standards in a comprehensive format.
- The grading system functions to facilitate domestic trade.
- 'Simple fashion' could be changed to 'effective' or 'understandable' fashion to more accurately convey the purpose of the grading system.

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### **3. FOCUS ON THE GRADING SYSTEM**

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#### **PRESENTATION 'Key Messages from the 2008 'Call for Issues' - Michael Scheffel, CFIA**

Mr. Scheffel outlined the issues raised in the 'Call for Issues' and from previous consultations regarding the seed grading system. It was noted that the 'Call for Issues' elicited seven replies.

Suggestions from the 'Call for Issues' include the following:

#### **A) Reduce the number of grade names**

- Remove the seed grading system and develop a truth in labelling system for Canada. In this case, it will be necessary to retain the pedigreed tags to confirm pedigreed status of the seed.
- Eliminate No. 2 grade names and associated quality standards. Seed would be classified as Foundation, Registered, Certified, or Common seed; standards for Common seed (or other lowest grade on the Grade Table) could become the new minimum import requirements.
- Separate pedigreed status from seed quality standards and have only No. 1 and No. 2 seed quality standards for each crop kind. The No. 1 and No. 2 standards would apply to all of the different classes of seed such that Canada Foundation No. 1, Canada Registered No. 1, Canada Certified No. 1 and Common No. 1 seed would have the same quality standards (similarly, for No. 2 seed).

## **B) Change standards for non-pedigreed seed**

- Remove germination standards for non-pedigreed seed and label the result of germination analysis.
- Remove all standards for non-pedigreed seed and label results of purity and germination analysis. It will be necessary to retain minimum import standards for weed seeds and other crop seeds.
- Remove Common No. 2 grade names on all Grade Tables.
- Completely eliminate grade names and associated standards for non-pedigreed seed.

## **C) Expression of standards**

- Prescribe seed quality standards in the same quantity that is analyzed in the seed laboratory (working sample weights).

## **D) Application of grade names**

- A suggestion was made that only Registered Seed Establishments (RSEs) and Accredited Graders should determine and apply a grade name to seed (pedigreed or non-pedigreed). It was further suggested that under this system, seed may be sold without a grade name but it must be labelled with detailed seed quality information if it is sold without a grade name.

In addition, there were other suggestions made in the 'Call for Issues' including incorporation of additional seed quality characteristics (vigour, sclerotia bodies) and creating a Canada Certified Blend pedigreed tag to be used on blends of Certified lawn or turf seed and on blends of Certified forage seed.

## **DISCUSSION**

Participants were asked to discuss the benefits of the current system, to identify key issues with the current system, and to propose options for improving the grading system. Streamlining the grading system and reducing the number of grade names were the focus of the discussion.

One participant inquired whether there are other countries besides Canada that use grade standards. Mr. Scheffel and Mr. Jones (CFIA Saskatoon Laboratory) explained that the EU also uses a grading system but it does not include as many combinations of pedigree and standards as the Canadian grading system.

Some of the discussion focused on whether the grading system is still the best way to achieve the goals set out previously. A 'grade' conveys a lot of different things and

thereby helps to keep things simple. Participants noted that the grading system facilitates domestic trade but doesn't necessarily help international trade.

### ***Removing the No. 2 grade***

There was substantial discussion regarding provision of sufficient information to buyers. The No. 2 grade does not indicate to consumers the reason for which the seed is No. 2 instead of No. 1; the lower numerical may be due to germination or purity and for purity, it may be due to various different weed seed contaminations. One suggestion was to require provision of seed testing results and information on the tag for No. 2 seed.

Participants felt that seed growers have a good understanding of the Grade Tables and seed certification. They are competent to judge the value of the No. 2 seed and to determine whether they wish to grow No. 2 seed of high pedigreed status in order to produce No. 1 seed of a lower pedigreed class. Mr. Adolphe (CSGA) suggested that it may be appropriate to maintain No. 1 and No. 2 for higher pedigreed classes but it may not be necessary for Certified seed. Seed analysts in the workshop pointed out that in some years, it is difficult for seed to meet No. 1 standards due to weather or other adverse conditions. In these cases, seed is sold as No. 2, ensuring that a pedigreed seed supply is maintained for the following year. No conclusion was reached regarding the elimination of No. 2 grade names and associated standards.

### ***Removing all standards for non-pedigreed seed***

The suggestion to remove all standards for non-pedigreed seed was also discussed. Participants felt that this may lead to common seed becoming a dumping ground for low quality seed; in addition, it would be difficult to control the spread of noxious weeds in this scenario. Some participants felt that all seed sold in Canada should be graded and that there should be minimum standards for all seed; they were not in favour of having a system in which seed can be sold by solely labelling detailed quality information.

### ***De-coupling pedigreed status and seed quality standards***

Many workshop participants expressed interest in and support for the suggestion to separate pedigreed status from the seed quality standards. Participants were aware of the differences that pedigreed status (Foundation, Registered, or Certified) are determined by the cycle of seed multiplication and application of CSGA's purity standards to crop inspection results while the numerical grade (No. 1 and No. 2) are determined by analysis of seed samples for seed quality characteristics (weed and other crop seeds, germination, seed borne diseases).

One suggestion from the 'Call for Issues' was to develop two numerical grades (No. 1 and No. 2 seed) with associated standards and have these two grade standards apply to all pedigreed and non-pedigreed seed. In this case, Foundation No. 1, Registered No. 1, Certified No. 1 and Common No. 1 seed would all have the same standards; similarly, Foundation No. 2, Registered No. 2, Certified No. 2 and Common No. 2 seed would have the same standards. It was suggested to use current Certified No. 1

standards as the new No. 1 seed standards and current Common No. 1 standards as the new No. 2 seed standards. This proposed system would tighten up the standards for minimum weed seeds and other crop seeds for lower classes of seed, thereby addressing some concerns about the introduction and spread of noxious weeds. At the same time, it would also slightly lower the minimum weed seed and other crop seed standards for higher pedigreed seed such as Foundation and Registered seed. As there would be no changes to the standards for Certified No. 1 seed, the modifications to standards for higher pedigreed seed would not affect the quality of seed sold for commercial crop production.

Representatives from the CSGA expressed support for de-coupling pedigreed status from seed quality standards. Some questions were raised with respect to crop-specific considerations for the standards in this proposed system. In addition, there were doubts as to whether this proposed system would actually reduce the number of grade names since the combinations of pedigreed status and seed quality standards would still exist but would just not be visible in the Grade Tables.

One participant further suggested removing the No. 2 seed standards from this system. In this case, there would be only No. 1 standards; it was suggested that if seed does not meet No. 1 standards, the seed could still be sold by pedigreed name with detailed quality information on the label (truth in labelling). For example, a Foundation seed lot with a percentage germination of 30% does not meet the No. 1 seed standard for germination but this seed lot could be sold as Foundation seed if the purity and germination test results are indicated on the label. The rationale for this suggestion is that professional seed growers are competent to make a judgement on the value of the seed based on the quality information provided and decide if they wish to use the seed to produce No. 1 seed of Registered status. One advantage of this suggestion is that the pedigreed status of the seed can be preserved for low quality seed. However, there were concerns raised by workshop participants with regard to noxious weed control as the suggested system lacks the minimum weed seed and other crop seed standards.

### ***Expression of standards***

The expression of standards was also discussed in the workshop. Before the discussion, Mr. Scheffel explained this issue to the participants. In the current seed grading system, weed and other crop seed standards are prescribed for 25 g, 500 g, or 1000 g of seed rather than the quantity of that is analyzed (working sample weights) to determine grade. For some crop kinds, seed testing rules require that as small as 3.13 g of seed be analyzed; in this case, seed analysts have to convert the analysis results by multiplying by 8 to compare to the actual standards expressed in 25 g. Extrapolation of the results of analysis from small quantity to large quantity is of somewhat concern. In other cases, seed of some crop kinds require analysis of a quantity of seed larger than the quantity in which the standard is expressed. This may lead to reporting of fractions of a seed on seed analysis reports (e.g. 0.5 seeds per 25 g seed), causing confusion to customers. To alleviate these issues, Mr. Scheffel suggested that the standards be expressed in the working sample weights (actual quantity of seed analyzed in the lab). Internationally, this would also enable countries to move towards

harmonization of sample sizes. After brief discussion of this issue, all the participants agreed in principle to this proposal.

### ***Inclusion of additional seed quality standards***

In the past, suggestions have been made to add some new quality characteristics to the Grade Tables (e.g. vigour standards, standards for sclerotia bodies for additional crop kinds). At this workshop, Mr. Haugen (Grain Growers of Canada) expressed a desire to have vigour included as a grading standard. However, some seed analysts did not agree as there are no standardized vigour testing methods for many crop kinds and different laboratories use different methods, resulting in test results that vary significantly among labs. CFIA representatives explained that it is hard to regulate these characteristics without standardized testing methods; in the past, CFIA's approach has been to not accredit laboratories for test methods for which no standards exist in the Grade Tables. In response to the request to add vigour standards to the Grade Tables, Mr. Scheffel pointed out that CFIA is looking for ways in which additional information could be incorporated into labelling on the seed tag, outside of the official information on the tag.

There were also discussions on voluntary versus mandatory grading and labelling of non-pedigreed seed. Mandatory grading and labelling of common seed would hopefully increase the compliance rate of common seed. Mr. Scheffel explained that it is currently difficult for CFIA to monitor common seed sales.

In summary,

- There was broad agreement among participants on the proposal to de-couple pedigreed status and seed quality standards to simplify the seed grading system.
- Participants agreed that the expression of the seed quality standards in the working sample weights (quantities of seed analyzed in the seed testing laboratories) was a good idea and should be pursued further.
- Participants reminded the CFIA that changes to the Grade Tables will also impact labelling, graders, and compliance; these items must be kept in mind in the development of any new system.
- Buyers of seed don't necessarily look at the Grade Tables. They look at tags and, in many cases, at seed analysis certificates; it is on these documents that they find the information they desire.
- One option for improving compliance for common seed may be for CFIA to consider changing the requirement for those who grade common seed to be accredited graders, similar to those who grade pedigreed seed. On the other hand, this change may enhance the stature of common seed, potentially leading to the use of variety names on common seed.

- Participants collectively summarized important features that should not be lost in any new system.
  - The BLUE tag 'brand' is important to maintain.
  - The No. 2 standard or something similar should be maintained for use following growing seasons that result in poorer quality seed.
  - Weed control should be maintained via the seed standards.
  - Quality management systems and a system that includes accredited labs, analysts, establishments and graders should be maintained.

Provision of more options, as suggested by the CFIA, does not necessarily mean that the system will be more prescriptive. However, it was pointed out that allowing more options may require more work for the CFIA Saskatoon Laboratory in terms of monitoring compliance and therefore, CFIA resource pressures may become an issue in this regard.

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#### **4. FOCUS ON SEED STANDARDS**

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##### **PRESENTATION "Key Messages from the 2008 'Call for Issues' - Willy Drost, CFIA**

Ms. Drost presented issues raised during previous consultations and from the 'Call for Issues' on specific seed standards and the suggestions made to address these issues.

##### **DISCUSSION**

After the presentation, participants discussed the major issues and suggestions and decided on the path forward for some of the issues:

- Spread of weed seeds and invasive species may be significant due to **low purity standards for some grade names** (e.g. Ground Cover Mixtures and Common No. 2 seed). Participants agreed that standards for Table XV (Ground Cover Mixtures) need to be tightened up to deal with this issue.
- **Add native species to the Grade Tables.** Currently, native species do not have unique standards, have difficulty meeting current standards, and are considered weeds when found in other lots of native species. It had been suggested that native species be added to the Grade Tables or to at least to designate native species as crops when found in a lot of another native species. However, some seed analysts felt that this may create some difficulty in that germination methods and procedures are not available for many of these native species. Grade Tables without germination standards were suggested for these species; however, such Grade Tables would not provide any new information that isn't already included in the current Regulations and/or the Canadian Methods and procedures for Testing Seed (M&P). No final decision was made on this issue.

- It was generally agreed that **new crops being grown in Canada** should be added to the Grade Tables (e.g. Camelina (false Flax)). Randy Preater (CSGA) explained that in CSGA's view, a weed becomes a crop when the CSGA certifies such a crop and some acreage of it exists.
- **Removal of crop kinds from the Grade Tables if no seed is produced in Canada for those kinds** (e.g. vegetables). Seed analysts noted that although vegetable seed is not produced in Canada, vegetable seed is imported, analyzed in a Canadian lab, and subsequently sold with grade names. Vegetable seed can also be sold without a grade name if germination results and the date of the test are labelled and all minimum standards are met. Betty Girard (McKenzie Seeds) opposed the suggestion to remove vegetables from the Grade Tables; participants involved in the white clover seed industry also opposed this suggestion for removal of white clover from the Grade Tables.
- **Movement of hemp from Table IV to Table II.** It had been suggested that hemp should be moved from Table IV to Table II since the seed size and shape of hemp are more similar to crop kinds in Table II than in Table IV. In addition, the quantity of hemp seed analyzed in the lab (500 g) is more similar to that for some crop kinds in Table II (e.g. Lentil and Lupine) and therefore, it is more appropriate to use standards expressed in 1 kg than 25 g. Randy Preater (CSGA) explained that seed size for different hemp varieties can vary significantly and that some are similar in size to crop kinds in Table IV while others are similar in size to crop kinds in Table II. It was decided that hemp should not be moved to a different table at this time; CFIA will look into the issue of different seed sizes of different varieties and determine which varieties are most commonly grown.
- **Analysis of crop kinds not in the Grade Tables** is confusing and time-consuming. For these crop kinds, a seed analyst must determine the seed weights to be analyzed, determine which Grade Table's standards to use, and must conduct full analysis (vs sequential analysis). In addition, it is difficult for clients to understand the results of the analysis as there are no germination standards for these kinds and grade names cannot be applied to the seed. These issues were not further discussed in the workshop but there was a consensus that CFIA should move forward on addressing these issues.
- **Difficult to separate species.** The separation of some species that are required to be separated during analysis is difficult and time-consuming (e.g. annual and perennial ryegrass in mixtures, different Brassica species in Ground Cover Mixtures, and different small fescues). It had been suggested that these requirements be eliminated. Doug Ashton (CSAAC) noted that these issues could be addressed by amending the M&P.

- It had been suggested to **remove the standards for *Brassica rapa* in *Brassica napus*, and vice versa** (Table VII). It is felt by seed analysts that seed coat characteristics of *B. rapa* and *B. napus* are not as clearly different as in the past and that for newer varieties of *B. napus* and *B. rapa*, the two species cannot be accurately separated. Therefore, the accuracy of the purity results used to establish the grade and of those used to verify the grade (CFIA monitoring) is questionable. Workshop participants generally concurred that a standard should not exist for a characteristic that cannot be accurately determined by seed analysts. Some participants suggested that CFIA consult with the canola industry (Canola Council of Canada) regarding the importance of this standard in canola production and what the impact on the industry would be should this standard be removed. CFIA agreed to contact the Canola Council in this regard.
- It had been suggested to remove the standards for “**durum wheat in common wheat**” and “**common wheat in durum wheat**” in Grade Table I. However, participants felt that this standard is often a factor in determining the grade and does serve a useful function as common and durum wheat have very different properties and end uses.
- It had been proposed that the Grade Tables (or footnotes to the Grade Tables) could indicate species for which **hard seeds** are to be included in the percentage germination. Participants generally agreed with this recommendation, but noted that further discussion with seed analysts is required to identify additional species for which it would be appropriate to include hard seeds in percentage germination. Doug Ashton (CSAAC) noted that this issue is already dealt with in the M&P and a regulatory amendment is not required to make relevant changes.
- **Pure seed standards in mixtures.** It was pointed out that crop kinds not listed in the Grade Tables may be components of Lawn or Turf Mixtures (Table XIV), and Ground Cover Mixtures (Table XV) but the “pure seed standard” does not apply to those species. In these cases, it seems illogical to apply the pure seed standard to some species in the mixtures but not to others. In addition, some seed analysts find it difficult to carry out the pure seed test. It had been suggested that pure seed standards are impractical and could be eliminated. Mr. Scheffel (CFIA) pointed out that this test is required for all components of the mixture in the US and the results are used for labeling of all components. It is unclear as to why analysts in the US are comfortable carrying out this test but analysts in Canada are not. Participants agreed that this area warrants more study; CFIA will follow up on this issue.
- Participants did not agree with the suggestion that the standard for minimum percentage germination for all pedigreed seed in Canada should be 90% for all crop kinds. Crop kinds are very different in their germination potential.

- Several suggestions were offered in the 'Call for Issues' to improve the clarity of standards in order to assist analysts in properly applying them. These standards include 'Primary plus Secondary Noxious Weeds', 'Additional Common Wheat in Durum Wheat & Durum Wheat in Common Wheat', and 'Other Crops including Total Barley, Rye & Triticale'. It was agreed that a small working group of analysts would be established to work on this and report back to the group with recommended changes.
- Standards in the body of the Regulations but not specifically stated in the Grade Tables are often overlooked. Participants agreed with the suggestion to move toward incorporating the standards specified in Section 7 of the Regulations into the Grade Tables. They further agreed with the concept of using symbols or other indicators to highlight the existence of relevant requirements in the footnotes and/or to indicate which footnote pertains to which standard.
- Participants agreed with several recommendations to improve the user-friendliness of the Grade Tables. Many of these can be incorporated into the non-official PDF version of the Grade Tables but it may not be possible to incorporate them into the official version from the Department of Justice. CFIA will consider these options in the next revision of the PDF version of the Grade Tables.
- Participants discussed several other suggestions that had been made via the 'Call for Issues':
  - Addition of Primary Noxious Weed Seeds to Tables IV and V. Participants noted that tightening up of the WSO could address this issue and that this is an area CFIA needs to examine further.
  - Another suggestion was to use the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) stabilized names for species in the Grade Tables. This would address the issue that species names often change. The ISTA list is stabilized every six years; adopting the names in this list implies that CFIA would be amending the species names in the Grade Tables (regulatory change) every six years. Mr. Scheffel suggested that if species names were to be updated consistent with ISTA, then the initiative should wait until 2012 in order to be in sync with the ISTA timetable.
  - Participants disagreed with the suggestion to remove regional standards and state only national standards in the Grade Tables and the body of Regulations. They pointed out that regional standards are considered valuable by the industry and meet informational needs for the buyer.

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## 5. THE PATH FORWARD

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At the close of the meeting, participants discussed next steps in the review process. CFIA indicated that the input from the meeting is enough to move forward in developing an options paper on streamlining the grading system including examples of Grade Tables.

It was generally agreed that additional surveying of stakeholders would be useful only after the options document is available to help frame the discussions. The timeline, therefore, is as follows:

- CFIA may gather some further input at upcoming meetings this fall/winter.
- CFIA will develop the options paper and circulate it to workshop participants by mid-January 2009.
- The group will meet again in mid-February 2009 to discuss the options paper, provided funding is available. CSI and CFIA may consider a wider group of participants to be invited to that meeting.
- The options paper will be amended based on feedback at the February 2009 meeting, translated and distributed for broad consultations in March 2009.

In summary, participants generally were of the view that the meeting was timely and helpful. They noted that having different aspects of the seed industry in the room rounded out the discussion. They expressed the hope that the momentum continues. Mr. Scheffel said that long-term success requires that all participants take the time to reflect on the issues, and remain patient but engaged in the process.

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## **6. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS**

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### **Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

Brenda Baergen – Saskatoon Laboratory  
Fuyou Deng – Seed Section (Seed Standards Unit)  
Willy Drost – Seed Section (Seed Standards Unit)  
Louise Duke – Seed Section (Seed Design and Delivery)  
Mélanie Gauthier – Program Network (Quebec)  
Anita Gilmer – Seed Section (Weed Seeds Unit)  
Steve Jones – Saskatoon Laboratory  
Janine Maruschak – Saskatoon Laboratory  
Katie Oppen – Seed Section (Seed Standards Unit)  
Mike Scheffel – Seed Section

### **Commercial Seed Analysts Association**

Doug Ashton  
Cathy Breadner – Canadian seed Laboratories Ltd.  
Betty Girard – McKenzie Seeds

### **Canadian Seed Growers' Association**

Dale Adolphe  
Guy Crepeau  
Randy Preater  
Craig Riddell  
Neil Shanks

### **Canadian Seed Institute**

Jim Mc Cullagh

### **Canadian Seed Trade Association**

Jacques Dion – Semican  
Bill Leask  
Trent Whiting - Secan

### **Grain Growers of Canada**

Harold Haugen – Alberta Pulse Growers

### **Intersol**

Debbie Belanger, recorder  
Warren Wilson, facilitator