



Canada's Agriculture, Food and Beverage INDUSTRY

● Canada's ● Seed Industry

An estimated nine out of every ten bites of food available to people across the world begins with the planting of seeds. Canada's vibrant agriculture and agri-food sector produces a great variety of quality seeds for sowing, including major grains and oilseeds, special crops, pulses, forages and turf grasses, ornamental and garden seeds.

The Canadian seed industry generates \$700 million in combined domestic and export sales every year. Nearly three quarters of the seed produced in Canada is used for domestic purposes. The well-established domestic market provides a solid base from which Canadian seed companies can better serve international markets. And because Canada already exports seed to approximately 40 different countries, including the United States, Europe and China, it has the capacity and mechanisms to produce and export even more high-quality seeds.

Canadian commercial seed producers and companies produce and market both "certified" and "common" seeds to meet the diverse needs of growers. Certified seeds are verified for their genetic identity and purity by an external field inspector, and are used by farmers who want additional assurance on seed quality, varietal purity and performance. Common seeds are mainly found with forage crops. About one third of forage seed production is sold as common seed, mainly in Canada and in the United States. Common seeds are more affordable to growers as there is no requirement to meet the same quality control and production practices as for certified seeds. Common seeds also include farm-saved seeds.

Several of Canada's seed organizations are active in international seed networks.

The Canadian Seed Growers' Association (CSGA) is the sole pedigreeing agency in Canada for all agricultural seed crops except for potatoes and tree seeds. The CSGA is made up of 5,100 specialized seed producers in nine provinces: British Columbia, Alberta,



Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

The Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA) is a voluntary association of 173 seed companies from across Canada. It represents a broad cross-section of Canadian businesses that develop, produce and sell seed. The CSTA represents nearly all Canadian seed exporters and Canada's seed exports. Membership varies widely from small firms specializing in garden seed and herbs to large co-operatives in Western Canada. The Association represents large multinational corporations with diverse interests as well as small family-run businesses. Many of the multinational seed companies have private plant breeding programs and are active in biotechnology. Members of the CSTA are involved in a number of initiatives, from variety exchange agreements at the R&D level to contractual agreements for production of seed for export and



import. In addition, many member firms are involved in seed multiplication under contract for out-of-country customers.

The Commercial Seed Analysts Association of Canada (CSAAC) represents a group of professionals engaged in the assessment of the quality of sampling and testing of seeds. CSAAC members are hired by private seed testing laboratories or are part of staff members of seed companies who carry out their own seed analysis. Seed analysts carry out seed purity, germination and vigor tests, and identify diseases and prepare certificates of analysis for seed grading purposes.

The Canadian Seed Institute (CSI) provides specific quality assurance services to the seed industry. The CSI accredits seed companies and seed testing laboratories to help them comply with the Seed Act and its Regulations, which govern the seed sector.

Additional information

The total growing area of certified seeds was 518,396 hectares in 2002.

For more detailed information

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Further information on products, suppliers and investment opportunities in the Canadian agri-food industry is available on the Agri-Food Trade Service Web site at: <http://ats.agr.ca>.

Canada's food and beverage industry is recognized internationally as being among the best in the world, both in terms of ensuring food safety and quality, and in providing a trade friendly environment. Consumers are more aware of food security, safety and quality, and are demanding more information about how their food is produced. More than ever, consumers want to know that their food is safe and that it has been produced in an environmentally responsible manner.

Canada's objective is to be the world leader in food safety, innovation, and environmentally responsible production and to be the best at meeting the needs of consumers at home and abroad.