

Commercial Seed Analysts Association of Canada
CSAAC Report to 79th Annual Meeting of the Alberta Branch CSGA
January 22th, 2008

On behalf of the Commercial Seed Analysts Association of Canada and the C.S.A.A.C. Board of Directors I am happy to extend greetings to the participants of the 79th Annual Meeting of the Alberta Branch CSGA. I appreciate the opportunity to update the branch on the activities of the CSAAC and topics of interest to both our organizations.

Membership.

CSAAC membership has increased to 93 active members, up from 84 last year. In 2006 the membership voted to recognize Registered Seed Technologists status as equivalent when applying for Senior Membership in the CSAAC. To date, 16 RSTs from the US have been accepted as Senior members of CSAAC. For those unfamiliar with the term RST, these are individuals that have passed an RST exam set by the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists which is our counterpart based in the US.

Training.

CSAAC has partnered with CFIA to form a joint Recruitment and Training Committee. The committee is working to identify challenges and explore strategies for analyst recruitment, training and retention. The committee is made up of CSAAC and CFIA Co-chairs and members. Many labs including CFIA have had difficulty recruiting and retaining analysts.

CSAAC Annual Meeting 2007.

The 2007 CSAAC Annual Meeting was held in Edmonton in June 2007, together with a workshop which included hands-on sessions on Tetrazolium testing, germination issues with flax and bean, purity separations of Durum in Common wheat, bluegrass separations, new seed blower calibration techniques and discussion of changes to the Canadian Methods and Procedures for Seed Testing.

Attendance was high, with close to 50% of active CSAAC members from 65% of Canadian accredited labs and two US labs participating, in addition to industry and government representatives.

A half-day Members' Open Forum provided an opportunity to discuss issues of common interest. Standardization among labs testing for the presence of *Fusarium graminearum* was raised as a concern by seed growers who had noted variations in results and methodology. It was decided to form a seed health working group which will at the outset focus on *Fusarium* testing, with pathologists and other specialists from outside CSAAC being invited to participate.

The Forum also saw the need for CSAAC, as the only umbrella organization for seed analysts in Canada, to participate in government/industry committees working on the *Fusarium* issue. During the meetings, the CSAAC Board decided to establish a Technical Committee which will function as an umbrella for the working groups. The Seed Health Working Group will be the first, with other possibilities being Germination and Proficiency Testing working groups. It is the intent that the working groups will draw on the expertise of both CSAAC members and non-members to resolve specific issues.

Canadian Methods and Procedures for Seed Testing (M&P).

The Canadian Methods and Procedures for Seed Testing or M&P are the official methods for testing seed for grading according to the Seeds Regulations of Canada

A revised M&P took effect July 1, 2007. The document has been distributed to all accredited labs in English and French, and is available from CFIA as well as the CSAAC website.

During the CSAAC annual meeting in Edmonton, CFIA presented 18 proposals for revision to the M&P to take effect in July 2008. Following discussion and voting by CSAAC members, 13 of the proposals will move forward for incorporation into the methods manual. Also discussed was the protocol for the M&P revision process. The protocol was introduced in 2006 and continues to evolve to ensure timely updates for the testing methods required for grading of seed.

Seed Health Testing Survey.

CSAAC initiated a survey of seed health testing being conducted in Canada. A survey form was sent to 32 accredited laboratories. Responses were received from 15 labs, of which 8 reported conducting seed health tests. Results of the survey are being compiled and will be shared with the seed industry and CFIA. A preliminary review indicates approximately 40 species of pathogens are being tested for in cereal, Brassica and legume crops.

Proficiency Testing Working Group.

A proficiency testing working group has been initiated by CSAAC in response to lab concerns about delivery of the proficiency testing program which is an essential component of the lab accreditation program. The working group is made up of CSAAC, CSI and CFIA members. The objective is to ensure a workable proficiency testing program is in place and to resolve issues which arise related to the program.

Translation of CSAAC documents.

During the annual meeting in Edmonton, the CSAAC membership agreed that translation to French of core CSAAC documents should begin. The By-laws, continuing education protocol and membership application documents have been translated and are posted on the CSAAC website. Translation of documents will continue and we also intend to translate the CSAAC website.

AOSA/SCST amalgamation.

The CSAAC is also following the discussion by our US based counterparts around the amalgamation of the AOSA and SCST. The Association of Official Seed Analysts (AOSA) is an organization of member laboratories, and the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists (SCST) is an organization individual seed technologists

The AOSA-SCST Collaboration Committee was established in 1995 to study areas for shared resources, and to consider and discuss a consolidated organizational structure and put together a report. The report included a recommendation for consolidation of the two organizations.

At the 2007 AOSA/SCST annual meeting the Associations voted to endorse the proposed direction. The next step is to move forward to expand the model for the 2008 meeting.

CSAAC Annual Meeting 2008.

The next CSAAC annual meeting and workshop will be held in London, Ontario, June 23-25, 2008, at the Station Park Hotel.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you wish you a successful meeting.

Terry McIntee
President CSAAC