

**Harmonization of Seed Testing Rules
(M&P and AOSA)
Talking Points, Nov 21 2008**

(KEY MESSAGES from CSI WORKSHOP)

1. Why Harmonize?

The purpose of harmonizing seed testing rules is to increase uniformity in testing and thereby to facilitate the international movement of seed. Currently, Canada and the US utilize different, but similar, seed testing methods and procedures. The goal of this harmonization effort is to harmonize sections of the seed testing methods and procedures where differences may cause disruptions or delays in the movement of seed between the US and Canada.

2. Focus of Current Harmonization Efforts

Differences in seedling evaluation methods and differences in working weights for purity analysis were identified as two areas that have a greater impact on the seed trade and could be harmonized in a shorter period of time than other areas.

A. Seedling Evaluation

Species for which differences in evaluation can result in a significant difference in germination test results have been selected for harmonization efforts.

Species	AOSA	M&P
Corn	-Seedling is abnormal if the first leaf has emerged at time of evaluation but is damaged and the coleoptile has specific defects. -If the leaf has not emerged and the coleoptile is split more than 1/3 the length, seedling is abnormal	-Seedlings is abnormal if leaf is badly shredded or longitudinally split. -A split coleoptile is not evaluated as abnormal based on the length of the split; other factors are taken into consideration.
Cereals	Seedlings are abnormal if the coleoptile is split from the tip more than 1/3 the length of the seedling	The condition of the coleoptile is not an evaluation factor on its own.
Brassica species	AOSA does not specifically describe the evaluation of yellow cotyledons.	Seedlings are considered abnormal if 1/2 or more of the total cotyledon tissue is yellow or white, with no green tint.
Soybeans	-Tests can be extended two days. -Percent hard seed reported and added to percent germination.	-Tests can be extended four days. -Percent hard seed not reported nor added to percent germination. -Special addendum for evaluation.
Hard seed in large seeded legumes	-Test can be extended five additional days. -Percent hard seed reported and added to percent germination.	-Test can be extended half the number of days of test but no more than 5 days. -Percent hard seed is not reported nor added to percent germination.

B. Purity Weights

The committee decided to focus on three specific situations:

- 1) Both AOSA and M&P sample sizes are greater than 25,000 seeds
- 2) AOSA sample size is less than M&P (thereby requiring retesting for sale in Canada of seed imported from the US)
- 3) Either AOSA or M&P sample sizes are greater than 25,000 seeds

Both AOSA and M&P sample sizes are > 25,000 seeds
Mustard (oriental, Indian, brown)
B. juncea, canola-quality oilseed
Lespedeza (common or kobe)
Clover, hop (large,small)
Fescue, fine-leaved
Crested dogtail
Kentucky bluegrass
Bentgrass (colonial, velvet, creeping)
Tobacco
AOSA sample size < M&P sample size
Cereals (wheat (common, durum)), barley, buckwheat (common, tartarian), emmer, oat, rye, spelt, triticale)
Bean (field, broad, faba), pea, soybean
Corn
Safflower
Soybean
Mustard (black)
Lespedeza (sericea or Chinese)
Clover (alsike, Persian, white)
Timothy (common)
Fescue, hard
Bluegrass (annual, Canada, rough, wood)
Weeping alkaligrass
Redtop
Either AOSA or M&P sample size > 25,000 seeds
General species
-Reduce sample size where more than 25,000 seeds are being tested

C. Administrative Changes

A working group will be established to address administrative changes that could be made to the AOSA Rules and the M&P so as to ensure consistent use of language to eliminate perceived discrepancies between the two sets of rules (e.g. 'must', 'shall', and 'should', etc).

3. Road map for Progress

Working groups are being established to evaluate the identified differences. These working groups will bring forward recommendations for changes to the Canadian Methods & Procedures (M&P) and the AOSA Rules for Testing Seeds. Rule proposals will be developed to be voted on in March 2010 for Canada and in June 2010 for AOSA.

The Harmonization Working Group will work with stakeholders to ensure that this process is transparent and that all interested parties have the opportunity to participate in the process.

4. Key Contacts

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