



Year in Review

2022-23



Seed
Innovation
= Sustainability

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Vision and Mission

ABOUT US

Seeds Canada is the leading voice of the Canadian seed sector, representing seed growers, analysts, breeders, distributors, processors, retailers, service providers, and all stakeholders along the seed value chain from coast to coast. Our mandate is to support the growth of the seed sector, in Canada and worldwide, focusing on plant breeding innovation, seed regulatory modernization, international trade, value creation, and plant breeders' rights.

VISION

Our vision is to represent the full seed value chain and contribute to the success of our members, clients, and sector participants for the benefit of thriving food systems, sustainable environments, and successful businesses.

MISSION

Our mission is to deliver meaningful services and activities for our members and clients and support the development and growth of Canada's seed sector through leadership at the national level.

Letter from the President and CEO

First and foremost, thank you to our members, clients, Board of Directors, and staff for your support and hard work over the past year; your vision and dedication have built a strong, inclusive, progressive organization that is well-positioned to represent the entire seed value chain, collaborate with like-minded organizations, and continue to build strong relationships with policymakers into the future.

Our second year of operation focused on increasing communication and engagement with members and clients. We embarked on our first national member and client service tour in the winter and early spring, meeting with long time, as well as new and future stakeholders. Feedback from these meetings as well as our member survey is helping us develop enhanced programs and services. In addition, a members-only portal was launched last year to provide members and clients with essential information such as membership lists, committee discussion boards, and key policy documents.

Our first in-person Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in Winnipeg in July 2022, followed by a semi-annual meeting in Ottawa in November. Both meetings successfully brought members together to discuss key policy issues, member needs and program improvements. New financial systems and IT processes were developed to improve the delivery of services to our members and clients. In addition, we were pleased to welcome some new staff to the Seeds Canada team, replacing staff who left to pursue other opportunities or to fill vacant positions in policy, client services, and communications. We are proud of our dedicated team of leaders and highly skilled staff. Our strength as an organization is our broad representation, both geographically and across the seed value chain.





With representatives from organizations with diverse product offerings, we held a strategic planning session on intellectual property (IP) protection programming. As a result of this session, we are working to develop an IP action plan with short- and long-term goals. We have already taken steps to improve IP protection, compliance, and enforcement; increase communication; improve education and audit enforcement; improve functionality of the VUA platform; and advocate for regulatory and procedural changes - examples include our Plant Breeders' Rights Enforcement and Midge Tolerant Wheat (MTW) campaigns. Look for more emphasis on IP protection in the coming year.

Delivering seed program services, including oversight of the Registered Seed Establishments (RSEs) and Accredited Seed Laboratories, and delivering training programs for the RSE Operators and Graders, remains a priority for Seeds Canada, as does continuing to provide audit and inspection services to support our members' and clients' needs for identity preservation, food safety, organic certification, sustainability, and special label claims.

We have heard your requests for increased communication and responded with webinars on SRM, ISSB, IP (VUA), professional development, etc. as well as increased our social media presence with a targeted campaign on PBR enforcement, sustainability, and Midge Tolerant Wheat compliance. As we continue to grow, the Board has prioritized expanding our reach to a broader audience, such as our industry partners and federal and provincial decision-makers, to let them know who we are and what we are all about. With this goal in mind, we implemented our communications strategy, which included the successful launch of our industry newsletter - Seeds for Thought.

Advocating on behalf of members on key policy issues continues to be a priority. We were busy meeting with many government officials from AAFC (Agriculture and Agri Food Canada), Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Industry Canada, Treasury Board, key ministers, and MPs on critical policy issues such as SRM, IP, PBR, PBI and sustainability. For example, we were pleased to meet with the new President, Dr. Harpreet Kochhar, the new President of CFIA. In addition, we have recently hired a full-time Director of Government Relations (GR) - who will work to develop a GR strategy that will help us build meaningful relationships with government decision-makers and industry partners to make a significant contribution to policy affecting the Canadian seed sector.



On the policy front, we continue to advocate for regulatory change through the SRM process. We presented the ISSB (seed value chain) concept paper to the CFIA working group; its relevance has only been strengthened by the recent international regulatory benchmarking exercise commissioned by the CFIA. We launched a transparency database for gene-edited seed products, which the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food highlighted in her recent announcement on gene editing regulatory guidance. We were proud to work with our partners - Crop Life Canada and the Canada Grains Council - to secure critical updates to the gene editing legislation. Finally, we developed an action plan to facilitate sustainability discussions in the Canadian seed industry and create resources to support our members in their sustainability pursuits. We signed the International Seed Federation's Seed Sector Declaration to ensure we are working to promote Canada's sustainable seed sector on the global stage.

As a seed industry, we continue to advocate for what's best for the entire value chain, not just our own interests. We would like to congratulate our Board of Directors for their courage and leadership on critical policy files such as SRM, ISSB (seed value chain), sustainability, and IP.

We are pleased to share with you this snapshot of what we accomplished since our 2022 AGM. We are proud of our team and what we have achieved in our second year. As we look forward to the coming year, we remain committed to continuing to work with our members and clients across Canada, and we look forward to engaging more people in the conversation about Canada's seed industry.

Let's keep moving forward together!

Ellen Sparry
PRESIDENT



Ellen Sparry

Barry Senft
CEO



Barry Senft

Board of Directors

2022 – 23 Executive Committee

President: Ellen Sparry, C&M Seeds

Vice President: Eric McLean, JS Henry Seeds

Annie Bergeron, Semican (* worked at Les Grain Semitech up to December 2022)

Holly Gelech, SGS Canada

Quentin Martin, Cribit Seeds

2022 – 23 Directors

Philippe Charlebois, Semican (* served on Board up to January 2023)

Georges Chaussé, Sollio Agriculture

Chris Churko, FP Genetics

Brent Collins, BASF Canada Inc.

Dianne Gilhuly, Kent Agri Lab

Monica Klaas, Alberta Seed Processors Association

Jeff Loessin, Corteva Agriscience

Jeff Reid, SeCan

Nick Sekulic, Prestville Farms

Jim Wilson, Wilson Seeds Ltd.

Seeds Canada Committees

Seeds Canada has fifteen committees and various subcommittees. There are three distinct committee structures. All committee members reflect expertise, diversity (including regional diversity) and multiple competencies that reflect the committee’s mandate.

The Board has updated the term lengths of the Steering Committees and the Policy and Issues Committees to ensure continuity and Board representation on each committee. With Board elections now held in July each year, Board representatives will be appointed in August each year. The terms for the Steering and Policy and Issues Committees are now two years, with terms ending in October of each even-numbered year. Current Steering Committee members and Policy and Issues Committee leadership have been asked to serve until October 2024, when new two-year terms will begin. During this transition to new term lengths, if a current member or leadership member chooses to leave a committee, the committee will fill the vacancy for the rest of the term.



Operational Committees

Operational committees are committees of the Board that oversee the management and finances of Seeds Canada. Members are directors and are appointed by the Board of Directors. All Operational Committees meet regularly. Each has a term of reference and staff support. Seeds Canada's three operational committees are the Executive Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee and the Governance and Nominating Committee.

Steering Committees

Steering committees are member committees of Seeds Canada, and their makeup consists of volunteers from the general membership of Seeds Canada. Each steering committee is chaired by a member of the Board of Directors and has terms of reference and staff support. Terms of office are two years. New terms begin in October of even-numbered years. A call for members will be issued to the general membership of Seeds Canada prior to the end of a current term. All steering committees strive to have 8-12 members. The Board of Directors shall appoint the members. Meetings are open to committee members only. The Steering Committees are Advocacy & Communications (A&C); Diversity & Inclusion (D&I); Seed Testing & Quality Assurance (STQA); and Business Services.



Advocacy and Communications Committee

The Advocacy and Communications Committee meets regularly to review and advise the Board on key policy, advocacy, and communications issues. It also serves as a sounding board for staff. They represent all sectors of the industry, regions, and crops across Canada. It is supported by Seeds Canada's policy and communications staff. The committee is chaired by board member Jeff Loessin.

Committee members discussed key policy, advocacy, and social media campaigns from the past year. These included: Seed Regulation Modernization, ISSB (Value Chain), Sustainability, Intellectual Property, Plant Breeders' Rights (PBR), Social Media Campaigns on PBR Enforcement, Gene Editing, Plant Breeding Innovation, and Branding.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee meets and works to promote diversity and inclusion in our organization and throughout our membership. They represent all areas of the industry, regions, and diverse backgrounds. The Committee works in English and French; all materials are published in both official languages. It is supported by Seeds Canada's Communications and Member Services staff. The committee is chaired by board member Holly Gelech.

Committee members have worked on messaging for International Day of Diversity, International Women's Day, International Day of la Francophonie, Orange Shirt Day, Black History Month, Pride Month, Earth Day, and Pink Shirt Day. They have also discussed the need for a welcome/refresher session for new members attending their first Seeds Canada AGM. The committee strives to bring important diversity and inclusion ideas to the board. The goal of the committee is to ensure that Seeds Canada is an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.



Seed Testing and Quality Assurance (STQA)

The Seed Testing and Quality Assurance Steering Committee works with Seeds Canada's staff on issues related to seed testing. All work conducted by the committee is in support of improving membership and industry collaboration; communications; and policy and advocacy, in seed testing and the seed industry, including the Methods and Procedures for Testing Seed, the CFIA Proficiency Testing program, seed analyst training and accreditation, and strengthening partnerships within the seed testing industry domestically and internationally.

Committee members discussed training needs, programming, and content for seed analyst Professional Class members over the past year. Highlights included reviewing the training needs assessment survey, providing ideas for updating the continuing education program and points system, recommending working with AOSA/SCST on a workshop and forum at their AGM in Saskatoon this June, and recommending that Seeds Canada hold an annual workshop during the Seeds Canada AGM beginning in 2024 and going forward.



Business Services Steering Committee

The Chairs of our eight Policy and Issues Committees and the Seed Testing and Quality Assurance Committee Chair make up the Business Services Steering Committee (BSSC). In 2022, the BSSC was chaired by Chris Churko. Roy van Wyk and Lorne Hadley served as staff liaisons.

At the most recent meeting, Seed Canada staff reviewed Seed Canada's insurance coverage and provided an update on operations. Of note in the update: Intellectual Property (IP) investigative services were re-established as the COVID pandemic subsided, statistics were provided on several client programs, and an overview of priorities for 2022, such as expanding Seed Canada's auditor and inspector base, and using software tools to improve operational efficiency. The Committee also heard and discussed reports from the VUA and MTWD Subcommittees and issues from the Seeds Canada Policy and Issues Committee. There continues to be interest in developing a universal grower/producer identification system that could improve the performance of the MTW and VUA platforms.

Policy and Issues Committees

These committees are Seeds Canada member committees. Each has a leadership that are elected by the Seeds Canada general members, a Board appointed board liaison, and staff support. The leadership consists of a Chair, Vice-Chair, and a secretary. All Policy and Issues committee (P&I) meetings are open to all Seeds Canada members

Seeds Canada's P&I committees provide a forum for our members to discuss common opportunities and challenges in specific areas of the seed industry. They are also a mechanism for Seeds Canada staff to learn about areas that require policy, advocacy, and program support, and provide updates on ongoing initiatives.

Seeds Canada's eight Policy and Issues Committees are:

- Biotechnology
- Corn, Soybeans & Eastern Cereals
- Forage & Turf
- Garden & Vegetable
- Intellectual Property
- International
- Oilseeds, Pulses & Western Cereals
- Seed Applied Technology

Seeds Canada hosted two meetings per committee in the fiscal year 2023.

All eight committees had the opportunity to meet in person at our 2022 AGM in Winnipeg in July. In addition, four committees met in person at the bi-annual meeting in Ottawa. Forage and Turf met at the American Seed Trade Association's Forage and Turf Seed Conference in Kansas City, and the remaining three met virtually.

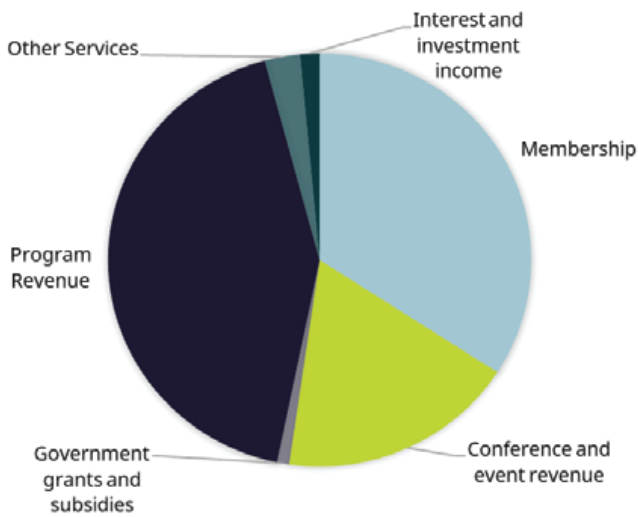
Seeds Canada staff have also been busy with the recent launch of the membership portal. This portal will feature moderated discussion forums for each Policy and Issues Committee. By providing a forum for ongoing conversation, Seeds Canada will ensure that members are kept abreast of industry developments and can better respond to challenges as they arise.

Changes to increase the efficiency of these committees were made over this past year and include transitioning from a work plan to a Statement of Issues that is aligned with Seeds Canada's strategic plan, new two-year terms, virtual meetings, and discussion forums in our new member portal.



Finance and Operations

With many activities returning after the COVID hiatus, our revenues became more diversified, with no single revenue item accounting for more than 42% of the total.



Membership revenue was generally consistent year over year at \$1.1 million, notwithstanding the implementation of a new membership fee model in the year. Program revenue increased by 17% year over year.

Overall, we saw a 27% increase in revenue.

Recognizing that we are a new organization, we budgeted for a deficit in the year to allow for investment in building our capabilities and programs. Expenses increased year over year as we saw the return of in-person meetings and on-site audits.



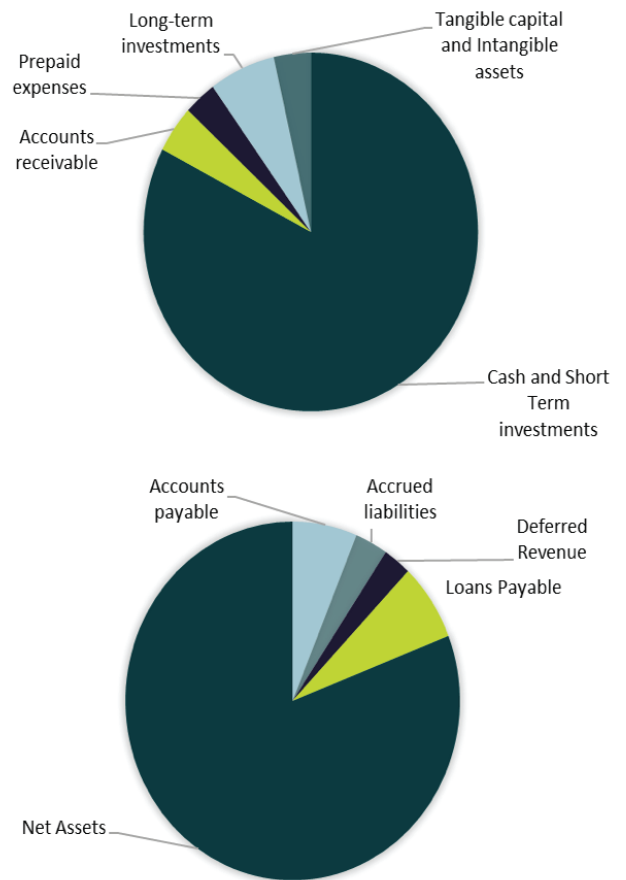
We continued to focus on streamlining our operations to improve efficiency and effectiveness by introducing a standard billing and administration process for all our services.



New billing process

In January, we implemented a new process to invoice our annual Registered Seed Establishment (RSE) invoices from our ERP system. While it was successful, it delayed our billing by a month, which negatively impacted our cash and investment levels by an excess of \$500k at year-end. However, this will have a minimal impact on our investment income, and we anticipate this to be reversed in the 2024 financial year as we revert to the previous invoice timing.

Our balance sheet remains strong with good cash balances. In the year, the Board adopted a reserve and investment policy. As a result, subsequent to year-end, \$2 million was transferred to reserves.



Highlights

SEEDS CANADA ANNUAL MEETING

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA
JULY 11 - 14, 2022



Annual General Meeting

Seeds Canada celebrated its first anniversary with its first in-person AGM in Winnipeg from July 11-14. The four-day conference, entitled “Rooted for Growth”, brought together hundreds of seed growers, seed company representatives, industry professionals, and government representatives under one roof.

President Ellen Sparry officially opened the conference with our AGM. Attendees heard updates from our CEO, Barry Senft, and an SRM session was held on the Functional Framework and the ISSB. The highly informative, interactive, and educational Seed Testing Workshop was held, and all eight P&I Committees met. We also had a members-only moderated Q&A session with our senior management team, as well as an open forum on seed testing.

Our banquet featured keynote speaker Tyler Hayden, who also facilitated our professional development workshop, which was a terrific opportunity for member interaction. Our Halftime Social at IG Field, home of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, gave members a chance to get out and get some fresh air. They were also able to take part in catfishing and golf with our pre-conference kick-off activities.



Semi-Annual Meeting

Our in-person Semi-Annual Meeting in Ottawa on November 28 – 29 was successful. Seeds Canada's President, Ellen Sparry, and CEO, Barry Senft, opened our first in-person semi-annual meeting with greetings and updates on Seeds Canada's initiatives. The Hon. Lisa Thompson, Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food welcomed members and highlighted their support of Seeds Canada and how they are looking forward to working with Seeds Canada on key issues. The 2021 Canadian Plant Breeding Innovation (CPBI) Award was also presented to Dr. Istvan Rajcan.

They also presented Seeds Canada's position on the Variety Registration, Seed Standards and Grade Tables and Seed Certification Task Teams findings and where they may align with Seeds Canada policy. The session concluded with a Q&A session with members.



At our Member's Only SRM session, members participated in an in-depth update on the consultations on our Functional Framework and ISSB (Seed Value Chain). Members also heard the feedback the Board has received from members and proposed next steps. There was a lively discussion and substantial input on the Functional Framework and the next steps to be taken. Another members-only session with the Senior Management Team provided updates on their departments. The session also included a Q&A with members. The session was very well received and appreciated by members, and we plan to continue this at future events.

We were honoured to have Senator Rob Black, Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, join us and give a welcome address at the President's Reception.



Seed Regulatory Modernization was the focus of the conference, with Director of Policy Lorne Hadley, and Regulatory Affairs Manager, Lauren Comin, providing an update on the SRM process, the SRM Working Group and Task Teams to date.

Membership/ Client Services National Tour

Barry, Krista, and Roy enjoyed getting out and meeting members and clients in January and Barry in Quebec in February. The tour officially wrapped up in April with a webinar for members and clients that were not able to join us when we were in their area. The team met with over 60 members, clients, and stakeholders in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, London, Guelph, Quebec and virtually during the tour.

These grassroots meetings, which are part of our member and client engagement strategy, help us gain valuable insight into the needs of our members and clients, improve our programs and services, and develop future programming. The senior management team has discussed the feedback internally and with the Board.

We will be planning another national tour next year!

Winter Tour 2023



Membership Services

Membership Survey. Thank you for responding!

This past autumn, Seeds Canada conducted an extensive survey of its members, yielding a remarkable response rate and invaluable feedback. This feedback, coupled with the input we received during our road tour, is crucial to our efforts in devising programs and content for our members. While many respondents expressed their satisfaction with the current member services and communications, they expressed a desire for more information regarding SRM and Seeds Canada's involvement in the process. Additionally, they requested regular updates from the board and committees and summaries of member meetings. To address these concerns, we have started regular email updates through our Member Alerts and included updates in our Seeds for Thought newsletter. Furthermore, we are hosting regular member-only webinars on key issues and topics.

We also took steps to improve communication and services for seed analysts and laboratory members, as we heard from Professional Class seed analysts that they felt services were lacking. Being a seed analyst member of the Professional Class and having a Seeds Canada Seal to use on a laboratory's Report of Analysis shows the lab's clients that the lab and the analyst signing their report are committed to competence, the accuracy of results, and going above and beyond regulated requirements and the client can have confidence in the results they receive.

The survey also shed light on the Seeds Canada meetings. Most of the respondents favoured the Annual Conference/AGM be held in July, spanning no more than two and a half days and without any concurrent sessions. Seeds Canada has taken heed of this feedback, and henceforth, the number of meeting days will not exceed two days, and there will be no concurrent sessions. As for the Semi-Annual Meeting, the respondents preferred a virtual format, with November being the favoured month. The Board is conducting the meeting virtually this November and will assess whether to continue with this format and timing in 2024 and beyond. Regarding Policy & Issues Committee meetings, most of the respondents preferred a combination of virtual and in-person meetings, as needed (not hybrid). We will go ahead with virtual P&I meetings throughout the year, with in-person meetings in conjunction with another industry event, as and when needed.



Membership Portal

Late last year, we initiated the launch of our member portal, which includes a comprehensive list of our esteemed members, encompassing our Professional Seed Analyst members and their respective Seal numbers. We have created a public directory that is searchable by crop to allow those interested in connecting with members the opportunity to do so. Moreover, it will also serve as a platform for membership renewals for the year 2024. Gradually, this portal is poised to evolve into a vital tool for effective communication and information dissemination across our membership base.

Elections & By-Laws

Seeds Canada produced its Nomination and Election Policy in preparation for the first Board Director elections at this year's AGM. This process includes writing various other policies and procedures to support the elections, including Director and Committee Consent and Code of Conduct forms. Seeds Canada also conducted a full review and update of its By-Laws which will be voted on by members at the July AGM.

Professional Development Seed Analysts

Seeds Canada is updating its Continuing Education program for analysts and moving the points and database to the member portal to simplify tracking and administration. We are also building relationships and exploring potential partnerships with organizations such as ISTA (International Seed Testing Association), AOSA, and SCST. We are including more analyst content in our industry newsletter and sending out specific Member Alerts for seeds analysts. We held a digital imaging webinar in March and worked with AOSA and SCST to organize a workshop and forum at their annual meetings in Saskatoon in June. Starting next year, we are planning to host our annual meetings on a rotational basis throughout the country in easily accessible locations, and we will be including a seed analyst workshop. This will enable seed analyst members to attend an in-person workshop without incurring high travel costs every few years. Analysts will have the choice to register for the full conference and the workshop or the workshop only.

Client Services

In 2022, Seeds Canada resumed its full slate of service offerings after the pandemic, with staff and contractors delivering training, auditing, and inspection services in-person. We prioritized restarting training programs for industry professionals, conducting five new grader training sessions, and four online training sessions for Seed Import Conformity Assessors.

We also focused on re-establishing training and mentoring plans for new auditors and expanding auditing ability by working with new and existing auditors in multiple provinces. Additionally, Seeds Canada worked to increase the number of auditors for the Canadian Grain Commission's CIPRS and HACCP programs. In our organic program, we submitted our application for accreditation as a Certification Body under the U.S. National Organic Program. We successfully added aquaculture to our accreditation as a Certification Body under the Canada Organic Regime.



New grader training in Saskatoon, March 2022
-Jennifer Scott, Manager of Client Programs



We maintain our ISO 17065 accreditation.



SEEDS CANADA

Client Survey...
1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree



Client satisfaction with our various audit, inspection, and certification services remains high

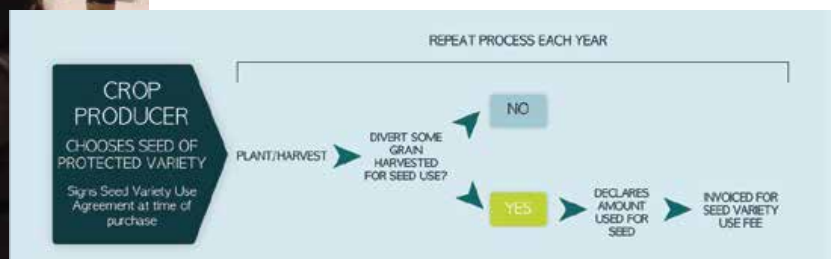
Intellectual Property Protection (IP)

Seeds Canada recently held special member focus groups to address challenges such as the long-term decline in the use of certified seed and the need for better tools to protect seed innovation. In a strategic planning session on intellectual property (IP) protection programming, Seeds Canada identified several initiatives to improve IP protection, including increased compliance and enforcement, clear and direct communication, education, and advocacy for regulatory and procedural changes. Seeds Canada will develop an Intellectual Property Action Plan with short-term and long-term actions to improve IP protection for its members.

Variety Use Agreement (VUA)

Seeds Canada has invested considerable time and effort into improving and developing its seed contract management platform, known as the VUA platform. Throughout 2022, numerous updates were implemented, including the launch of the annual seed use declaration and royalty collection process, updates to the variety maintenance tool, and streamlining of the process for signing VUA's. The VUA platform is a web-based software application that streamlines the signing and documentation of a standard VUA for PBR'91 protected varieties between retailers and seed buyers. It also allows seed buyers to declare their use of farm-saved seed of protected varieties.

Seeds Canada has been actively seeking user feedback and implementing ongoing improvements to the platform. In late October, we launched our first set of major updates, streamlining administrative processes, making it easier for dealers to manage their varieties, and improving the contract execution process. The VUA platform remains a priority for Seeds Canada, and we will continue to work on updates that add value.



Plant Breeders' Rights (PBR)

Seeds Canada monitors online seed sales across Canada for potential seed intellectual property rights infringement and regulatory compliance issues. Canada's Plant Breeders' Rights Act requires the breeder's permission to produce, reproduce, sell, clean/condition, store, import or export seed of PBR'91 protected varieties. Farmers have the privilege of using grain of a PBR'91 protected variety harvested on their own farm for use as seed on their own farm, but they are prohibited from selling or advertising brown-bagged seed produced from grain of PBR'91 protected varieties. Both seed sellers and buyers may be liable for infringement of PBR'91 variety breeders' rights. Buyers are responsible for knowing the varieties they are buying to ensure they are not breaking the law. The easiest way to ensure that you're buying legal seed is to buy certified seed from an authorized seller. bring important diversity and inclusion ideas to the board. The goal of the committee is to ensure that Seeds Canada is an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

Seeds Canada has curated PBR-focused messages and graphics to share on social channels and has radio scripts available for use.



IP Marketplace Monitoring

Over the past year, Seeds Canada assessed over 150 seed-for-sale advertisements on social media platforms and sent over 90 watch notices and 30 warning notices to IP infringers. If you encounter an advertisement for non-pedigreed seed which you think may be a potential IP infringement, whether it be through your social channel network or a hard copy advertisement, please send the details to Mel Reekie, Intellectual Property Services Manager, at mreekie@seeds-canada.ca for follow-up.



Midge Tolerant Wheat (MTW)

Seeds Canada prepared a new Midge Tolerant Wheat (MTW) compliance campaign for the 2023 growing season. The MTW Compliance Campaign was designed to complement the existing MTW communications you're used to, with an added focus on stewardship compliance.

There has been a demand from Midge Tolerant Wheat seed distributors to emphasize and deliver the compliance message to both retailers and growers. Collective compliance is essential for the longevity of the only known source of midge tolerance, the Sm1 gene.

In addition to email communications to authorized retailers and purchasers of MTW seed, we ran ads on Kijiji and shared the message through our Seeds Canada social channels. To maximize the reach of our stewardship messages, please consider sharing our posts!

We're all responsible. Don't lose Midge Tolerant Wheat. If you have any questions or want further information, please contact Mel Reekie, Intellectual Property Services Manager, at mreekie@seeds-canada.ca



Seeds Canada Policy Desk

The policy team's priority in 2023 was the development of a better regulatory framework for our members.

Seed Regulatory Modernization (SRM)

Seeds Canada's senior staff have been involved in the CFIA's formal SRM process. Roy van Wyk, Director of Client Services and Strategy, continued his role as the Industry Co-chair of the SRM Working Group and was joined by Lorne Hadley, Krista Erickson and Lauren Comin as working group members. During the past year, the working group was able to establish a "shared vision" document to help assess recommendations and progress.

During 2022-2023, five of the eight scheduled task teams, established to address specific areas of the Seeds Regulations completed their work. Significant efforts were made by CFIA staff and others to bring the Task Team members to a common basic understanding of the complex issues being discussed. Despite this, the task teams struggled to reach a consensus on recommendations in most cases. In early 2023, two of the final task teams, focusing on imports and exports, met for the first time. The final Task Team, Information and Labelling, is expected to be announced soon.



SEED REGULATORY MODERNIZATION WEBINAR:

WHAT IS SRM AND WHERE ARE WE IN
THE PROCESS?

OCT 4, 2022 10:30 AM EDT

From February - 1 May 2023, the Winter 2023 SRM Online Consultation was conducted by CFIA. This online survey was structured with a series of questions addressing what CFIA considered the most important recommendations from the first three task teams. Seeds Canada consulted with our members to develop a set of recommended responses. Staff hosted webinars to explain the rationale for each response and members were encouraged to adopt the responses where appropriate in their own submissions.

After much delay, the international benchmarking report was released. It compares Canada's current regulatory model with five progressive seed countries. The key findings are:

- In most cases, the seed value chain coordinates the seed system: industry-led, government-enabled.
- There were no examples of a single stakeholder responsible for processes, standards, or protocols.
- There is no single path for variety registration. There is a spectrum. For some countries, registration is a simple listing – for others, testing is a requirement. However, some form of listing is valuable to the industry.
- The ability to change regulations, standards or protocols varies, with highly rated seed systems responding quickly based on industry consensus.
- Responsiveness and efficiency are enhanced by first-party inspection, which is enabled in many countries through accreditation and audits.
- Canada's seed system is NOT the most respected in the world, nor is it highly rated in terms of enabling the business of agriculture.
- Canada is the only country where common seed cannot be sold by variety name. This is a barrier to meeting UPOV requirements. The solution is not to allow common seed to be named but to look at the interplay between the Seed Regulations and Plant Breeders' Rights to provide a clear path for remuneration by the rights holder.

CFIA management has committed to completing all SRM task team discussions by Autumn 2024 and the entire process by Autumn 2025.



Independent Seed Standards Body (Seed Value Chain)

The ISSB is an independent advisory body. It is made up of representatives from the seed value chain who can discuss and recommend policy to the regulatory, the CFIA. Building on similar bodies in other areas of regulation, such as the Plant Breeders' Rights Advisory Body, the ISSB ensures that the framework is responsive to changes in the industry and considers the impact on all users.

Following presentations and one-on-one discussions, the Seeds Canada Board of Directors approved the Independent Seed Standards Body (Seed Value Chain) for discussion with our seed sector partners. Moving forward, a steering committee will be established to oversee the further development of the concept. The proposal would then be presented to the senior management of the CFIA, the AAFC and other government departments and agencies. This proposal is key to ensuring that Canada's Seed Regulatory Model continues to evolve to an inclusive, modern framework.

Plant Breeding Innovation (PBI) and Varietal Level Transparency

On May 16, 2022, Health Canada released much-anticipated guidance to introduce products of new breeding innovation, including gene editing, into the Canadian food system. This guidance increased the clarity and predictability for when a product of new breeding innovation would be regulated as a novel food and when it would be treated the same as a product of conventional breeding. This guidance was delivered along with an expectation of transparency: the Transparency Initiative. The Transparency Initiative is intended to provide Canadians with information on non-novel, foods produced by gene-edited plants.

In October 2022, Seeds Canada launched the Canadian Varietal Transparency Database. The database represents the seed industry's dedication to providing the transparency required by the grain industry for continued market access and has a collaboration with Crop Life Canada and the Canada Grains Council long before the release of Health Canada's guidance. However, with the release of the guidance and the Transparency Initiative, the Canadian Varietal Transparency Database has also become the ideal vehicle for delivering enhanced transparency at the variety level for the agricultural industry and consumers. This database is in addition to the continued transparency that farmers will have at the retail level through company-specific materials and information tools, such as provincial seed guides. Seeds Canada and the seed industry are committed to keeping this database as the products of plant breeding innovation are deployed in Canada.



The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) was expected to release an updated Environmental Release Guidance in the fall of 2022, but concerns were raised by the organic industry about the transparency of seed sources. As a result, the Federal Minister of Agriculture delayed the release of the guidance and convened a working group made up of the conventional agricultural industry and the seed sector, along with representatives of the organic sector.

The Canadian Variety Transparency Database was deemed adequate to deliver the required level of transparency to allow the Minister to release this guidance on May 3, 2023. We congratulate the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for their commitment to the clarification of regulatory guidance around plant breeding innovation in Canada. In addition, we applaud the Minister's efforts to support plant breeding innovation that will create a transparent, science-based regulatory system and encourage investment and innovation in Canada.

We thank our partners, Crop Life Canada and Canada Grains Council, for their work on this file. Seeds Canada is committed to the continuous improvement of the Canadian Varietal Transparency Database. To that end, we will seek feedback from an AAFC-led committee that will review whether transparency is meeting the needs of the entire value chain.



Sustainability in Seed

Government Consultations on sustainable agriculture strategy

In early December 2022, the federal government announced the formation of a consultation process to develop a Sustainable Agriculture Strategy for Canada (formerly the Green Agriculture Plan). It will focus on five themes - soil health, climate adaptation and resilience, water, climate change mitigation, and biodiversity. An advisory group, co-chaired by Scott Ross, Executive Director of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and including producer and industry groups from across the country, will work to ensure that relevant solutions are included in the strategy and to maximize collaboration, transparency, and information sharing.

Seeds Canada will work with our grower partners on the advisory committee to ensure that the contributions of seed and seed technology to sustainable production are recognized in the future strategy. whether transparency is meeting the needs of the entire value chain.

Seeds Canada has signed the International Seed Federation's Seed Sector Declaration.

Seeds Canada has officially added its name to the International Seed Federation's (ISF) Seed Sector Declaration, recognizing that seed is the "starting point" on the path to agricultural sustainability. The declaration was established before the United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit in September 2021, which provided an opportunity to explore how seed can contribute to achieving the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We join seed companies and regional seed associations worldwide in this commitment, including the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) and the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA).

Sustainability Action Plan

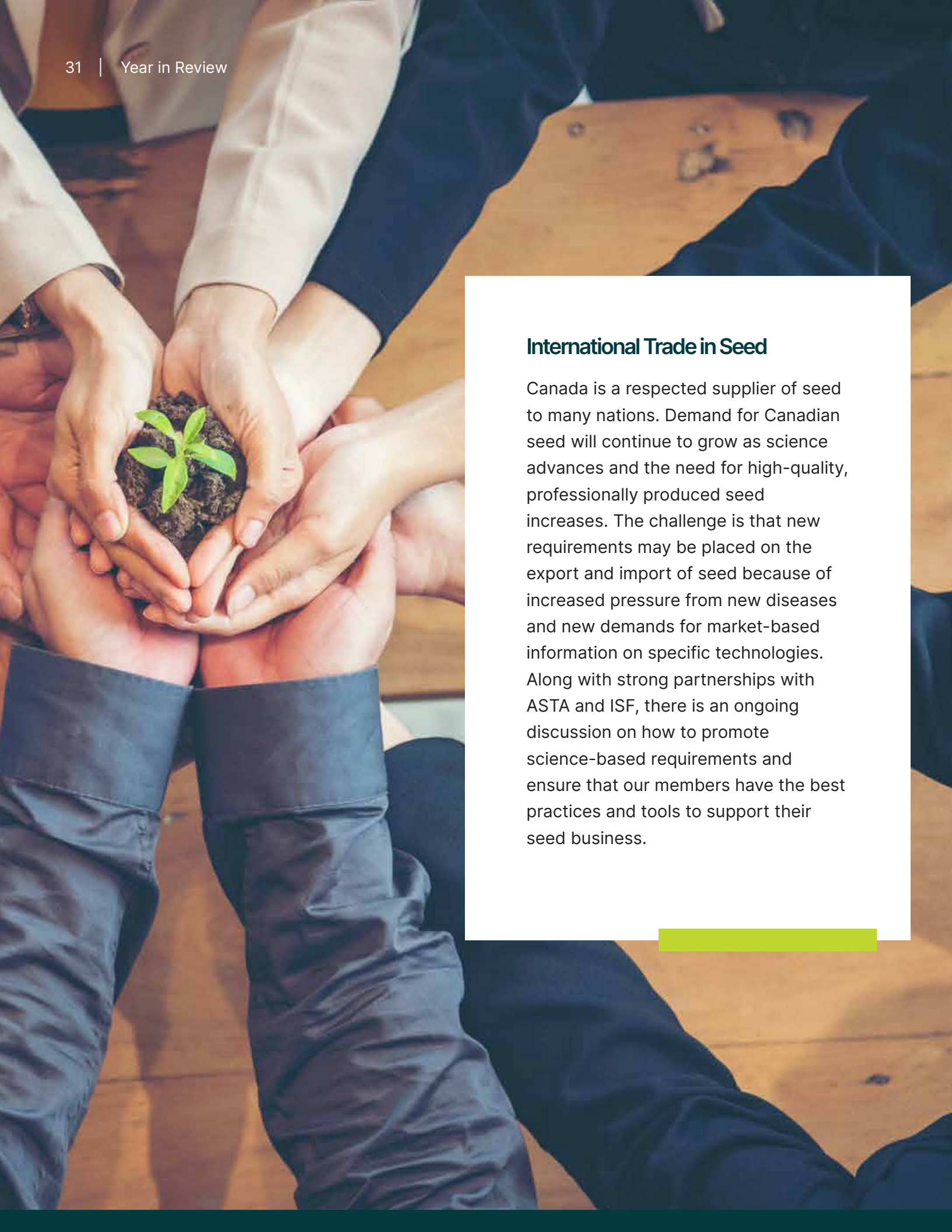
Seeds Canada has developed a draft Sustainability Action Plan to coordinate the promotion of the seed industry's contribution to sustainability, promote a culture of continuous improvement and provide guidance on industry best practices. The draft was circulated to our members for consultation in April 2023. This commitment kicks off a push to develop a strategic sustainability plan that will be launched at the 2023 AGM.



The Seeds Canada draft Sustainability Action Plan offers the following key actions to help achieve the above objectives:

- Advocate for genetic innovation and seed's contribution to sustainability
- Be a catalyst, facilitator, and supporter of sustainability conversations and initiatives in the seed sector.
- Partner for impact.
- Develop resources to support members in adopting best practices for sustainable production and delivery of seed and seed technology.





International Trade in Seed

Canada is a respected supplier of seed to many nations. Demand for Canadian seed will continue to grow as science advances and the need for high-quality, professionally produced seed increases. The challenge is that new requirements may be placed on the export and import of seed because of increased pressure from new diseases and new demands for market-based information on specific technologies. Along with strong partnerships with ASTA and ISF, there is an ongoing discussion on how to promote science-based requirements and ensure that our members have the best practices and tools to support their seed business.



Communications

We successfully established Seeds Canada as the national voice of the seed industry in Canada and the go-to source for relevant seed-related information. We implemented a communications strategy intended to serve as a roadmap to ensure our efforts address the needs of our diverse membership and client base and further the success of the seed sector. Key goals of the strategy include:

- Establish Seeds Canada as the go-to source for relevant seed-related information for members, clients, and external audiences.
 - Create compelling narratives to guide messaging
 - Grow membership and client base
 - Continue to develop effective use of online tools
-



We launched an industry newsletter - Seeds for Thought; member webinars; increased our social media presence with a targeted campaign on PRB enforcement, sustainability, and Midge Tolerant Wheat compliance; increased our communications to members and customers with our new Member Alerts; and began improvements to our public-facing website.



- SRM Webinar: What is SRM and where are we in the process (October 4)
- SRM Webinar: Policy Framework Discussion (October 26)
- SRM Webinar: Seed Standards & Grading Tables (December 14)
- VUA; Great Potential in a Collaborative Approach Webinar (February 16)
- CFIA - Winter 2023 SRM Consultation and Update for Seed (February 22)
- Seeds Canada Follow-up Winter 2023 SRM Consultation and Update for Seed (March 7)
- Digital Resources in Seed Testing (March 16)

International Variety Development Models: What lessons can Canada Learn? (April 12)

Office Consolidation

We are pleased to have completed the consolidation of our offices into one location on Albert Street in Ottawa. This location is convenient for our ongoing activities, such as attending conferences and meetings with government officials and industry partners. During the move, we took the opportunity to make some improvements to our IT infrastructure that will provide greater flexibility and reduce the need for future investments. We also enhanced existing policies and raised awareness of IT security among our staff.

Human Resources Management

During the year, we defined and formalized our human resource management policies and procedures. An employee handbook was also published to clarify policies and expectations for our employees. We were pleased to hold our first face-to-face meeting with all employees in September. This was an excellent opportunity to update and receive feedback from staff, do some team building, and set priorities for the rest of the year.



What's Ahead for 2023-2024

Seed School 101

Seeds Canada will be launching a comprehensive seed industry education course. The program will provide an overview of the complete seed system in Canada. Participants will learn about the entire value chain from developing varieties to selling seed, and everything in between. This will be relevant to a wide audience, including those new to the industry, those wanting to learn more about areas outside their specific area of expertise, government, etc. The course will be held in Winnipeg, MB, with classroom sessions in the morning and site visits in the afternoon. The course will last approximately three days and will be based at the Cereals Canada office as they will be the course facilitators. More details will be announced later this year.

Future Annual Conferences

The Board of Directors has decided that beginning in 2024, the Seeds Canada Annual Conference/AGM will be held in an easily accessible location and on a rotating basis in 4 cities across the country. We are currently looking at a rotation of four cities in Alberta, Saskatchewan/Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, considering adding a destination location every fifth year. More details will be announced in the coming months. This decision was made based on feedback from our fall member survey and discussions with members.



Continuing Education Program for Professional Class Seed Analysts

We continue to work on updating our continuing education program and points system and will be transferring the current database and points to our portal.

Information and details will be shared in the coming months. Remember to look for the laboratory's CFIA accreditation number and the Seeds Canada seal and signature of the CFIA-accredited analyst/Seeds Canada Professional Member to ensure that your seed has been analyzed to the highest standard.

Client Services

Seeds Canada is planning to expand its services by adding and mentoring new auditors for various programs such as the Seed Program, CIPRS and HACCP Program, FSA Program, and Organic Certification Program. We will also continue to provide quality services such as new grader training and online training options. We are working to enhance our IP services through updates and development of the VUA platform, implementing an IP marketplace monitoring program, and launching IP compliance audit services. We also plan to promote our services to clients and members through advertisements, trade shows, and articles in industry magazines. Seeds Canada aims to increase staff credibility by attending and presenting at various agricultural industry meetings, conferences, and events, and taking part in various industry meetings and working groups.

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers interlocked. The person on the left is wearing a grey and white plaid shirt, and the person on the right is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt. The background is a soft-focus field of green plants, likely a garden or farm, with brown soil visible. The lighting is natural and bright, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Policy

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property compliance and enforcement is a priority activity for Seeds Canada. Contract services for compliance audits and coordinated education campaigns were provided by the legacy organization, the Canadian Plant Technology Association (CPTA). Looking forward to 2023-2024, Seeds Canada will be looking to refresh many of the compliance and enforcement activities that were on a necessary hiatus due to the Covid pandemic. As the landscape will be different in 2023, Seeds Canada will work with members to develop an intellectual property strategy before implementing new programming. Programming is expected to include enhanced audit services, new education campaigns for both seed buyers and sellers and more functionality for the Variety Use Agreement (VUA) platform.

Sustainability

In late 2022, sustainability was added as a key priority for Seeds Canada. In 2023-2024, Seeds Canada will release a Sustainability Action Plan to coordinate sustainability initiatives and advocacy in the Canadian seed sector and develop resources to support our members in their sustainability efforts. Members should expect many opportunities to engage with Seeds Canada on the Action Plan and other similar initiatives in the international seed sector. Seeds Canada will build relationships with like-minded agricultural organizations and ease collaboration between stakeholders, policymakers, and members. In July 2023, our Annual Conference/AGM will feature sustainability as a key theme, with a dialogue on the Action Plan, a panel on seed sustainability, and other speakers to highlight what our industry needs to do to continue to succeed and provide sustainable tools for Canadian farmers.

Plant Breeding Innovation

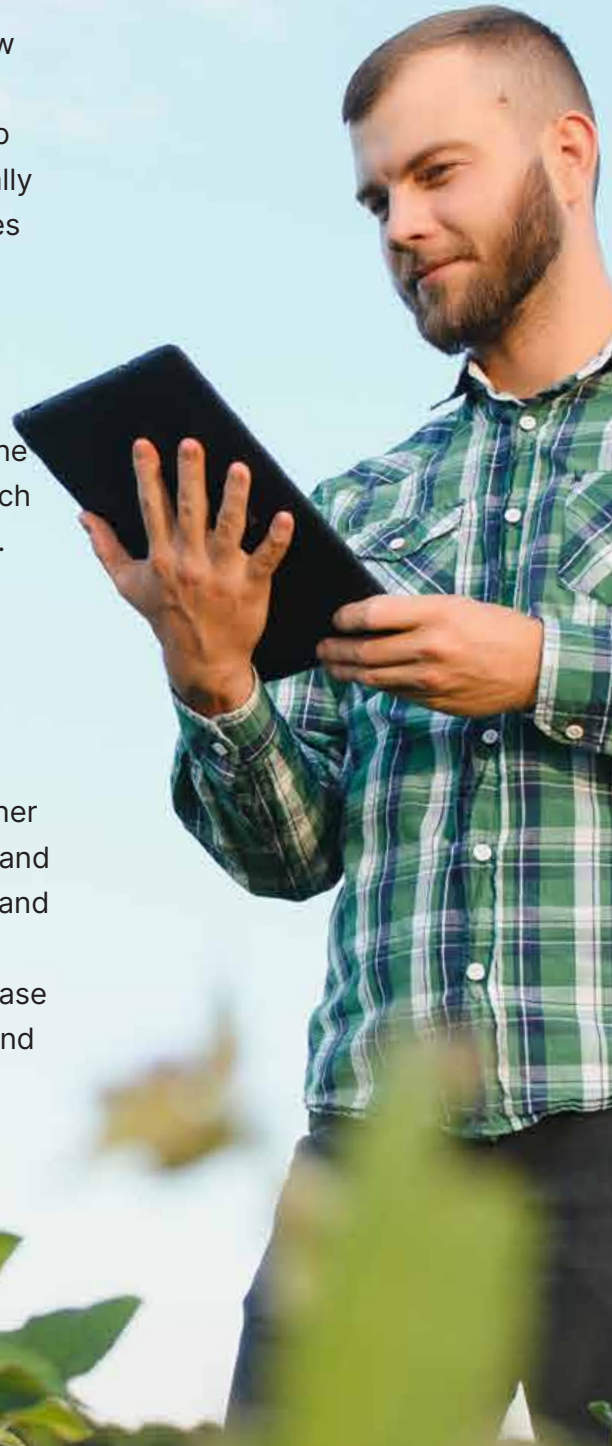
In 2022-2023, Health Canada released guidance for products of new plant breeding innovation, providing a clear pathway for the introduction of gene-edited products into the food supply. In 2023-2024, we look forward to working with our partners to support the release of guidance from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Plant Biosafety Office and Animal Feed Division to ensure that Canadian farmers can benefit from new breeding innovations and successfully commercialize. We will continue to support and engage in advocacy initiatives to help establish gene editing and new breeding innovations as globally accepted and safe so that Canadian industry has opportunities beyond our borders.

Communications

We will also continue to increase the effectiveness of our online materials by expanding our social media presence and outreach to the media, stakeholders, and government decision-makers. These tools will allow us to better share policy files, events, campaigns, and advocacy tools with you!

Government Relations

We will continue to build and strengthen relationships with other industry organizations, both domestically and internationally, and provide opportunities for our members and clients to engage and discuss critical issues. Our goal is to effectively influence and contribute to public policy through our ability to present our case to the right people - including key ministers, senior officials, and influential MPs - and to develop and implement a government strategy for Seeds Canada.



Year in Review

2022-23



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