



FLAX COUNCIL OF CANADA

GMO Flax Update 6th October 2009

The Flax Council of Canada issues regular GMO Flax Updates to keep producers and industry informed on the actions being taken to resolve the current GMO flax issue. The notices are posted on the Flax Council of Canada's web page: www.flaxcouncil.ca. Readers should refer to Corrected GMO Flax Update 28 September 2009 for background information. Further information can be obtained by contacting Barry Hall, President, Flax Council of Canada at flax@flaxcouncil.ca

Week Ending 4th October:

Development of Triffid Specific Test:

- The current method used by European labs to identify some GMO markers in flax is known as a construct-specific test. While this method is sound, it does not provide 100% accuracy in determining the presence of Triffid flax.
- In the absence of more definitive methods, construct-specific tests are currently being used by Canadian laboratories to detect the presence of Triffid in Canadian flax throughout the value chain.
- The Flax Council of Canada has commissioned the National Research Council's Plant Biotechnology Institute (PBI) in Saskatoon, SK to develop a more accurate method to detect the presence of Triffid. It is known as an event-specific test.
- The event-specific method searches for the presence of a DNA sequence unique to a certain GMO. This method would give laboratories throughout the world a Triffid-specific test
- At the request of PBI, the Flax Council has commissioned DNA Landmarks Inc. to work with PBI to develop the Triffid-specific test, thereby speeding up its development threefold.
- It is impossible to predict when the Triffid-specific test will be available although PBI and Landmarks Inc. say progress is being made.

Scientific Cooperation Between Canada and the European Commission

- The Canadian Government and the European Commission are in discussions to create a closer working relationship between PBI and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) to develop the Triffid-specific test.

Sampling / Testing of Commercial Flax Stocks

- The Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) is undertaking a geographic study of existing flax stocks held in commercial positions throughout Canada. Canadian companies are

participating in the study and are sending appropriate samples from their facilities to the CGC for construct-specific testing, which identifies some GMO markers in flax.

- The CGC continues to test harvest samples from the previous crop year (2008) in an attempt to determine the nature and geographic location of the GMO presence in flax.

Ongoing Sampling and Testing Priorities

- Priority is being given to testing stocks in commercial positions to determine the nature and geographic location of the GMO presence in flax.

Flax Protocol

- The Canadian Government is working with the Flax Council of Canada to develop a Flax Protocol for discussions with the European Commission prior to the 19th October meeting of the (GM Food and Feed and Environmental Risk section) of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health with the Member States.

International Grain Trade

- The Flax Council is working closely with members of the European flax industry and other members of the international grain trade to restore the flax trade.

Summary

- **The GMO flax issue is a serious problem that is causing significant financial hardship to both Canadian producers and industry and European industry and consumers.**
- **The Flax Council encourages the European Union countries to help re-establish flax trade between Canada and Europe by creating a technical solution.**
- **Triffid has received regulatory approvals for food, feed and the environment in both Canada and the United States.**
- **Canadian flax remains safe for food, feed and processing.**
- **This is a regulatory issue, not a safety issue.**
- **The Flax Council is working with the Government of Canada to develop a Flax Protocol to meet European requirements.**