



FLAX COUNCIL OF CANADA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Industry introduces fall testing program for flax

Winnipeg, Manitoba - As of September 1, 2010, any flax entering the commercial grain handling system will have to be subjected to more rigorous testing for the presence of CDC Triffid than was previously required. As of this date, producers must arrange for approved laboratories to test a 2 kg representative sample, but, under the new requirement, the laboratory will draw and test from that sample, four subsamples, each weighing 60 grams. All four lots must be Triffid-free for the result to be considered a negative result. The industry has called for this procedure because using multiple subsamples significantly increases the reliability of the test results.

This new requirement is expected to double testing costs for producers, but it is part of the industry's ongoing measures to meet the very strict protocols for flax shipments to the European Union.

"This intensive test procedure significantly increases test reliability, thereby boosting confidence in our assessments. All flax must be tested so it can be directed to appropriate markets," said Barry Hall, President of the Flax Council of Canada.

Canada's single largest importer of flax is Europe. In 2009, testing in the EU detected the presence of an unapproved GM-event in a shipment of flax from Canada. EU regulations dictate zero tolerance for GM-material in flax.

Since this discovery, significant progress has been made in determining the extent of the problem in Canada. Over 6 000 farm flax samples have been analysed to date. Thanks are extended to producers who have allowed the Flax Council to collect this data. Because of them, the industry now has a much better idea of the extent of the contamination. The need, however, for extensive testing continues so that flax may be segregated and moved to the appropriate markets. Once again, the Flax Council is asking producers for their continued cooperation in allowing the results of their tests to be collected. This monitoring will enable the Council to track the progress that is being made in cleaning up the problem.

The lists of approved labs for Triffid testing as well as laboratory submission forms are linked to the Flax Council website (www.flaxcouncil.ca). Each of the labs has successfully completed proficiency testing conducted by the Canadian Grain Commission.

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For further information, please contact

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