



Grading Seed for the Canadian Market

Although common seed may be sold in Canada with a grade statement, Certified (Pedigreed) seed requires a grade statement which is derived from the seed analysis report data and the appropriate crop grade table. Within the Canadian Federal Seed Act, grading seed is specified; within the Canadian Seed Regulations there are 21 different grade tables for different species groups. A grader utilizes the data from the seed analysis report, appropriate grade table and then assigns a grade on the graders report, the retailer of the seed can attach a grade tag or print the grade on the analysis tag.

Seed is graded because it provides information concerning:

1. Pedigree (genetic) validity
2. Quality (physical and physiological) of the seed.

Grade Report aids in:

1. Facilitating seed entry into Canada and sale of seed.
2. Eliminating duplicate testing and relabeling
3. Ensuring quality required by sale is met

All seed needs to be graded unless:

1. Seed is breeder or select class seed (only seed of Foundation, Registered, Certified or Common has to be graded) - Section 5(1) of the Seeds Regulations
2. The seed is vegetable, roots or herbs and is marked with the germination level and date of test. Section 5(5) of the Seeds Regulations

Imported seed either moves past the border by:

1. Being cleared by a Canadian Food Inspection Agency official for release to the buyer (note; seed must be graded by the buyer prior to sale)
2. Being allowed to enter the country for delivery to an "Authorized Importer" who will review the certificate of analysis supplied by the shipper and release the seed following which the seed must be graded prior to sale to consumers
3. Being "pre-released" by an Authorized Importer (AI) who will request certificate of analysis or a sample drawn by a recognized sampler. The AI may then release the seed on the documentation supplied for grading or may have the sample graded by an officially recognized lab and grader in Canada. The seed may then be imported into Canada on the basis of having being "pre-released."



Types of Seed Classes

1. Pedigreed seed – Graded by grader accredited by Minister of Ag using recognized standard methods on an officially-recognized sample. Pedigreed corn maybe tested in a foreign laboratory supervised by a state or national government or by an RST.
2. OECD seed – has had the pedigree of the seed validated by the Crop Improvement and OECD tags issued by USDA. Quality test needs to be conducted according to recognized standard methods and grade assigned.
3. Common seed – Anyone can put a grade on common seed and hybrid corn.

Canada recognizes the official labels of OECD and of AOSCA if the seed is pedigreed and instructs Canadians not to remove them. The grade is conveyed to customers not on a label on the package but rather by being written on the invoice at the time of sale. Grading of seed labeled with an AOSCA or OECD label must be conducted by an accredited grader using the results of an officially recognized test conducted in an officially recognized laboratory in or of Canada.

Grading Process

1. Confirm grade name (pedigree) of seed.
2. Confirm method of testing is approved.
3. Confirms accurate testing was done, amount, column headings from grade table are all addressed.
4. Use grade tables to determine standard and compare test results to confirm grade.
5. Communicate grade level and provide additional labeling directions.

Recognized Standard Methods - Canadian M & P, AOSA Rules, ISTA Rules Rules of Grading Reports

1. Grade should be applied on the grading document separate from the certificate of analysis.
2. “Grade Report” for transfer of grade information to the client.



Steps in Obtaining a Canadian Seed Grade

Pedigreed Seed

Foundation or Register seed of a variety planted in U.S.

Field history documents and Foundation or Register tags supplied to state Seed Certification Agency (SCA)

SCA inspects field and approves for certification

Authorized or Recognized Sampler draws sample for quality tests

Recognized testing laboratory (U.S. Lab) uses recognized method to generate a Seed Analysis Report (SAR)

SAR is used by an authorized/recognized grader (5/30/05 – currently no recognized graders exist in U.S.) to determine grade on a “Grader’s Worksheet” (GW) found at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/seesem/consult/polteste.shtml> or the SAR is sent with shipment, clears customs at border and a Canadian Authorized Grader assigns grade to seed lot.

Common Seed

Seed produced in U.S., Sample drawn and sent to Recognized U.S. based laboratory.

Recognized testing laboratory uses recognized methods to generate a Seed Analysis Report (SAR)

Grade is determined from recognized Analysis Report and Grade is listed on “Grader’s Worksheet” (GW)

Seed lot shipped with SAR & GW. Clears Canadian Customs at border. Buyer Satisfied.

Seed lot shipped with SAR & GW. Clears Canadian Customs at border. Graded by an Authorized Canadian Grader. Official Grade assigned to seed lot. Common seed does not need an authorized grader. Anyone can grade common.

