

Canaryseed News

News from the Canaryseed Development Commission of Saskatchewan (CDCS)
& the Canaryseed Association of Canada (CAC)



Message from the Management Team

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and
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Mexico's recent actions make no sense and leave all sorts of unanswered questions.

The country has long been a major customer for canaryseed. Why would policy makers now be pressing for the complete elimination of weed seeds like wild buckwheat?

Mexico had registered some complaints earlier, but for most of us the present stance arose with no warning.

Back in July, a negotiated settlement appeared imminent. Mexico seemed to realize that its zero tolerance was not possible.

Unfortunately, as this is being written, Mexico seems to have returned to the position that even one quarantine weed seed in a shipment is unacceptable.

Many other grains are shipped from Canada to Mexico, and no doubt contain small amounts of these quarantine weed seeds. Why pick on canaryseed?

It seems to be a case of government regulation and bureaucracy gone amuck. Language and cultural differences have not helped the negotiations.

Although it's natural to conclude Mexico is taking this action to drive down the price of canaryseed, that doesn't seem to be the motive. Other than Canada, there aren't really any significant suppliers, and there's no evidence of Canadian canaryseed coming into Mexico through other channels.

We'll continue to monitor the situation and report to producers as the situation unfolds. Watch the website, www.canaryseed.ca for news.

On another note, we're happy to report our work to get human food approval for canaryseed is generating considerable interest from a number of companies which are experimenting with alternate uses.

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The Canaryseed News

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The final work is being completed to enable the Commission to seek novel-food approval for canaryseed in Canada. The rodent feeding trials now underway are one of those final steps.

If you are interested in the work being done by the Commission, please consider letting your name stand as a director. Now is the time to submit nominations.

Mark your calendar. Our annual meeting and information session, held as part of Crop Production Week in Saskatoon, will take place on the afternoon of Monday January 10.

Here's hoping for a long spell of warm, dry harvest weather. Goodness knows we need it.



What's Dry for Canaryseed by Kevin Hursh

With the late harvest in many areas, a number of producers have been asking what moisture content is considered dry for canaryseed.

Many years ago, there was no official conversion table for canaryseed on the standard moisture testers. At that time, a flax chart was sometimes used.

In more recent times, the Canadian Grain Commission has published a canaryseed conversion table as a service to the industry. The table is accurate, but since the Canadian Grain Commission doesn't regulate canaryseed, there's no stipulation as to what's dry, what's tough and what's damp.

In its publication on harvesting specialty crops, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture lists 13 per cent for safe storage of canaryseed. While this is a useful guideline, it's important to know what your buyers want. They may have parameters that differ from the 13 per cent guideline.

This article appeared in the Annual Meeting Edition, January 2010, however due to the difficult harvest conditions we feel it is pertinent to run again.

Mexico strictly enforces zero tolerance for quarantine weed seeds in Canaryseed shipments from Canada

By Carl Potts - on behalf of the Canadian Special Crops Association

Canadian canaryseed shipments to Mexico have been disrupted since late June, when Mexico implemented a "hold and test" policy for canaryseed shipments from Canada and indicated any shipments found to contain quarantine weed seeds would be rejected.

Canadian Special Crops Association (CSCA) has worked with Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), canaryseed exporters, Mexican importers as well as the Canadian Agriculture Minister on this issue in order to 1) release the shipments that were held at the border; and 2) to establish what the import requirements will be for new shipments moving forward.

Shipments held at the border: In early July, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Gerry Ritz and Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture reached an agreement that established a 60-day transition period to allow blocked shipments to clear immediately and to establish rules pertaining to new shipments.

In early August, the Mexican government outlined the conditions under which shipments held at the Mexican border could move into Mexico under quarantine for further cleaning in Mexico. We understand that most, if not all, shipments held at the border have been released to importers.

Import requirements for new shipments: Despite the efforts of industry and the Canadian government, the Mexican government continues to enforce zero tolerance requirements for weed seeds of quarantine concern for canaryseed shipments from Canada going forward. As growers know, it is impossible to guarantee zero presence of weed seeds in shipments of any field crop, even after the extensive cleaning most special crops go through. At the time of writing CSCA is trying to arrange a direct dialogue between industry and Mexican officials to discuss the problems in achieving zero presence of weed seeds and to work collaboratively with Mexico to find import requirements that will allow exports to continue.

CSCA declares Force Majeure: On August 19th, the CSCA declared force majeure on canaryseed exports to Mexico as a result of the Mexican government's establishment of zero tolerance on weed seeds of quarantine concern in canaryseed shipments from Canada. As a result, the time for execution of contracts of Canadian canaryseed to Mexico entered into on or before August 19 and traded under CSCA trade rules will be extended until the CSCA Board determines the effect of this event no longer exists. For more information on Force Majeure, please see the CSCA website at www.specialcrops.mb.ca.

What's next:

Direct dialogue with Mexico: CSCA is now recommending direct dialogue between industry and government officials in Mexico is needed in order to find a mutually acceptable resolution to this issue. We are hopeful that industry will have an opportunity to discuss these issues directly with Mexican officials and identify solutions that will allow trade to continue.

Canaryseed - Focused on Mexico at the Moment

Cam Laxdal, VP & Managing Director
Lakeside Global Grains Inc.
www.lakesideglobal.ca

Stats Canada released its August 20 report showing final canaryseed acres for 2010 at 310,000 acres with production at 1129 lbs per acre or about 150,000 tonnes. The acres seeded were quite a bit lower than the 435,000 acres reported in the June estimate. That survey was taken in late May/early June before planting was done - so quite a few of those 'intended acres' were not sown. Industry expectations were that about 340,000 acres were actually sown after factoring for unseeded acres of all crops.

The Stats Canada yield estimate of 1129 lbs in 2010 is higher than the 10-year average. Considering the crop is 1-2 weeks later this year and challenged by weather and weeds, this may be somewhat optimistic. Our 09/10 carryover will likely be smaller than the average of last three years (probably less than 50,000 mt) so beginning supplies are not burdensome. Even at 1129 lbs and normal export demand of 175-200,000 tonnes, it is clear demand will have to be rationed. This should support grower prices which are currently in the 18-20 cent range.

Currently affecting the demand side, however, is the Mexican standoff with respect to quarantine weeds. This situation which began in mid-June remains unresolved at the end of August and has effectively halted exports to Mexico for the past 2 ½ months. Mexico accounts for about 40,000 tonnes or 25% of all exports. The Mexican plant protection department, SENASICA (equivalent to our CFIA), stopped all imports of Canadian canaryseed on June 23rd citing violations with respect to detection of quarantined weed seeds in the shipments.

They name six quarantined weeds, stinkweed and buckwheat being the two most common to Western Canada. They state their tolerance for these six weeds is zero. The standard level of cleaning canaryseed has been to minimum of 99 per cent purity with maximum 4 per cent de-hulled (99/4) - this has been in place for decades and has applied to all markets.

The Canadian Special Crops Association (CSCA), the CFIA, the Minister of Agriculture and other industry participants have been working steadily since June to get this situation resolved. There have been multiple discussions with SENASICA as to what level of tolerance would be agreeable and workable for both sides. As of the end of August, no agreement has been reached.

On August 19, the CSCA declared "Force Majeure" on canaryseed shipments to Mexico, effectively suspending contractual obligations of the exporters for as long as this situation remains. In the meantime, Mexican authorities have stated imports can resume as long as the shipments are re-cleaned once inside Mexican territory. This would mean additional costs for the exporter and/or the importer and is not a long-term solution. It is unclear as to whether any Canadian exporters will ship under those conditions.

As long as this Mexican quarantine situation remains in limbo, it is doubtful much canaryseed will be shipped from Canada to Mexico - certainly much less than normal. This will weigh on prices for as long as this persists. If we see a resolution in the next month or so, prices will likely remain firm at current levels and move up through the winter, provided worldwide demand is consistent with past years.

Nominations are open for Canaryseed Development Commission of Saskatchewan Directors

Nominations are being accepted for four directors of the Canaryseed Development Commission of Saskatchewan (CDCS). Directors serve a three-year term and are eligible for re-election for one further term.

The CDCS was constituted by the Saskatchewan Agri-Food Act in February 2006. The CDCS board consists of seven elected directors who, as representatives of all Saskatchewan canaryseed producers, direct the operations and programs of the CDCS. There are currently two appointed directors on the board.

Directors are not paid a salary; however, they do receive a per diem for the actual days spent on CDCS business. Expenses are also reimbursed.

CDCS Directors attend approximately five regular board meetings per year and are sometimes called upon to represent the CDCS at meetings and major conferences that help shape the canaryseed industry. The total time commitment is typically fewer than six days per year.

To stand for office, nominate or vote, the person must be a registered producer with the CDCS. A registered canaryseed producer is any producer who has had a Saskatchewan canaryseed levy deducted in the last three years. All producers selling Saskatchewan grown canaryseed to registered buyers are automatically registered with the CDCS. A producer is no longer registered if they have requested a refund of their levy in the last two years.

A registered producer that is a corporation, association, society, or other designation is entitled to vote and to hold office through a designated representative who has been appointed in writing.

Nomination forms as well as Designated Voting Representative forms are available from the CDCS office, telephone (306) 975-6624. Forms must be returned to the Returning Officer no later than 12:00 p.m. (noon), October 27, 2010. Forms need to be signed by three registered canaryseed producers. (You may want four or five signatures in case someone who signs isn't actually registered.)

An election (if required) will be held by mail ballot with election results announced at the Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon, SK, January 10, 2011.

Important Dates to Remember

October 27, 2010

Nominations close 12:00 p.m. (noon)

November 17, 2010

Ballots (if needed) to be mailed to registered producers

December 10, 2010

Last day for ballots to be received

January 10, 2011

Election results will be announced at CDCS Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon

Uses for Canaryseed Evolve

by Dr. Carol Ann Patterson

Have you ever wondered where canaryseed originated or how it was traditionally used in previous times?

While canaryseed or *Phalaris canariensis* has been grown as a cash crop in Saskatchewan since the early 1970s, it is native to the Canary Islands. The islands have a diverse and unique animal and plant flora, including *Phalaris canariensis*.

The Canary Islands have a rich history of discovery and exploration by North Africans, Romans, Italians and Portuguese. With the Castilian conquest of the Canary Islands in the 1400s, these islands came under Spanish rule. The seven Canary Islands are a Spanish archipelago, which forms one of the Spanish Autonomous Communities. This archipelago is located just off the northwest coast of mainland Africa, 100 km west of the border between Morocco and the Western Sahara.¹

P. canariensis was introduced into the Netherlands and Britain from Spain about the middle of sixteenth century, then moved across the Atlantic Ocean to South America and Mexico, and eventually North America. It is the only plant of the *Phalaris* genus to be cultivated. The first mention of cultivated canaryseed in Canada is from the Experimental Farms Report of 1891 of the Report of the Minister of Agriculture, where it was grown in Indian Head, SK.²

Early food, agriculture and botanical texts from 1500 to the early 1900s say canaryseed was commonly used in the Canary Islands and surrounding Mediterranean areas as: a cereal grain for hot porridges; a flour in breads, puddings and cakes; and even as an ingredient in whisky making. The flour was deemed superior to wheat flour for sizing of fine stuffs because it "imparted a high degree of softness and suppleness to threads".³

One of the interesting applications of canaryseed is its use as a traditional botanical medicine. As far back as 1560, William Turner in his book 'A New Herball'⁴ describes the herb 'Phalaris' indicating that the "juice of the plant...(as well as) the seed...is good for aches of the bladder." Brazilian and Mexican pharmacopeias of the late 1800s describe infusions of the seed as an aid for kidney problems.

Even the Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal (1895)⁵ lists canaryseed, along with hemp, flax and mustard, as seeds imported into Canada for medicinal purposes. Researchers have recently been investigating the traditional use of infusions of canaryseed for their diuretic, anticholestermic and emollient properties.

These few references found for historical uses of canaryseed certainly open up possibilities for uses beyond bird seed. The Commission will be using this information, as well as the more technical analysis, to support its 'Novel Food' submission to Health Canada.

This project exploring the uses of canaryseed was funded by the CDCS checkoff program and the Agriculture Council of Saskatchewan through the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Saskatchewan (ACAAFS) program. Funding for the ACAAFS program is provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

1. Canary Islands History. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/canary-islands/history>. August 2010
2. Appendix to the Report of the Minister of Agriculture. 1981. Experimental Farms Reports. Early Canadiana Online
3. De. Serres, M. 1815. Notes on the use of the flour of the *Phalaris Canariensis*, for sizing Muslins and other Stuffs. *Annales des Arts et Manufacture*.
4. Turner, W. 1562. *A New Herball*, Parts II and III. (Eds). G.T.L. Chapman, F.M.C. Combie and A.U. Wenecroft
5. Market Report. 1895. *Drugs*. Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal 28(11).

Dr. Carol Ann Patterson of The Pathfinders Research and Management Ltd. is piloting the novel food project for the CDCS.

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Bornhorst Seeds Ltd.
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BroadGrain Commodities
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Clancy Seeds Ltd.
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Commodious Trading Inc.
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F: 778-426-1807

Export Packers Co. Ltd.
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Brampton, ON L6T 5K5
T: 905-792-9700 x4210
F: 905-792-1274

FNA Foods
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F: 306-651-0444

Fill-More Seeds Inc.
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GrainEx International Ltd.
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Horizon Agro Inc.
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North West Terminal Ltd.
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Parkland Pulse Grain Co.
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F: 306-445-1650

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The Canaryseed News



THE CANARYSEED DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MISSION:

To coordinate research and market use expansion for the advancement of the canaryseed industry for the benefit of growers and other stakeholders.

The Canaryseed Development Commission of Saskatchewan was established in 2006 under the Agri-Food Act, 2004

**CANARYSEED DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION OF SASKATCHEWAN (CDCS)
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