



Western Standards Committee record of discussion and recommendations

Date: November 4, 2025

Time: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm (CST)

Location: Canadian Grain Commission
Winnipeg, MB

Virtual option: Microsoft Teams

Members

Description

Canadian Grain Commission

David Hunt (Chairperson)

Derek Bunkowsky

Dr. Esther Salvano

Chief Commissioner

Chief Grain Inspector for Canada

Director General, Grain Research Laboratory

Nominated by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri- Food Canada

*Dr. Felicitas Katepa-Mupondwa

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Processors of grain

*Caalen Covey

*Kevin Sich

Canadian National Millers Association

Brewing & Malting Barley Research Institute

Exporters of grain

Brennan Craig

Canadian Grain & Oilseed Exporters Association

Producers of western grain

*Beverly Wieben

Fiona Jochum

Glenn Tait

Jean Harrington

*Shane Stokke

Shanna Stolhandske-Dale

Steven Donald

*Stuart Lawrence

Alberta producer (Alberta Pulse Growers)

Manitoba producer (Western Canadian Wheat Growers
Association)

Saskatchewan producer (Saskatchewan Wheat Development
Commission)

Saskatchewan producer

Saskatchewan producer (Flax Council of Canada)

Saskatchewan producer

Saskatchewan producer (Canadian Federation of Agriculture)

Saskatchewan producer (Saskatchewan Pulse Growers)

Additional

*Ian Armer
James Dunlop
*Nadia Singh
Robert Chapman

Terminal Elevator Association
Canola Council of Canada
Country Elevator Association
Inland Terminal Association of Canada

Regrets

Avtar Virk
Tala Mobayen
Devin Hartzler
Stewart Oke
Greg Fotheringham
Jon Fehr

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Canadian Special Crops Association
Alberta Grains
Alberta Grains
Manitoba Crop Alliance
Saskatchewan producer (Canadian Canola Growers Association)

Observers

*Sukhminder Sawhney
*Jasen Aussant
*Curtis Rempel
*Aiden Sanden
*Julianne Curran
*Lonny McKague
Shanell Dupras
Gino Castonguay
Dr. Marta Izydorczyk
Dr. Bin Xiao Fu
Dr. Veronique Barthet
*Joey Vanneste
Evan Thomas
Remi Gosselin

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Alberta Grains
Canola Council of Canada
Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission
Pulse Canada
Canadian Grain Commission
Canadian Grain Commission
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**indicates virtual participation*

Summary of recommendations and action items from this meeting

- The Canadian Grain Commission will bring forward the following items to the spring 2026 meeting:
 - a motion to change the grading factor for contrasting classes to contrasting colours in lentils
 - further discussion on heated corn and damage
 - a report on the study of more samples of brown damaged canola seed and sprouted canola
 - an update on the shrunken, broken, and total shrunken and broken in CWAD project
 - an update from the hard vitreous kernel (HVK) working group
 - further discussion on changes to the darkened kernels (amber durum) grading factor in the Official Grain Grading Guide
- Standards committee members accepted the research results and the CGC will close the broken and small canola project.
- Additional information on the separation of broken and shrunken grading factors in wheat will be discussed at a future meeting.
- Motion carried: “Recommendation for the Canadian Grain Commission to issue a trade memo on Friday, November 7, 2025 in regard to grading for darkened kernels in CWAD.”
- The grain grading alignment working group to be formed in late 2025 and will hold their first meeting in January 2026.

1. Chairperson’s comments

Lead: David Hunt

- Welcomed members to the meeting and introduced new and returning members.
- Members and observers provided introductions.

2. Approval of the November 4, 2025 Western Standards Committee agenda

Lead: David Hunt

- Meeting agenda was approved.

3. Approval of the April 1, 2025 Western Standards Committee meeting minutes

Lead: David Hunt

- Meeting minutes were approved.

4. Business arising

Lead: David Hunt

- No business arising.

5. Grain Standards Advisory Committee update

Lead: David Hunt

- The CGC provided a brief update on the outcome of the consultation following consideration of all stakeholder feedback.
- The CGC is maintaining the current Grain Standards Advisory Committee structure, making enhancements to better incorporate regional and sector perspectives.
- Meetings now occur approximately 8 weeks prior to the standards committee meetings to allow more time for stakeholders to distribute and consider information in advance.
- Voting provisions have been removed from the advisory committee terms of reference to better align with the role of technical support to the standards committees.

6. Western crop report

Leads: Evan Thomas and Dr. Marta Izydorczyk

For discussion

- A summary of the current Harvest Sample Program results to date was provided. The overall outlook for this year's crop is good.
- Results of the barley and oat harvest survey were presented. Slightly higher yield compared to last year with great germination and overall quality. Oat production was also higher this year.
- Due to the Canada Post strike, Harvest Sample Program samples were quite low compared to last year at the same date. Now starting to receive more samples as mail delivery resumes.
- Final quality reports will be available in the new year.

For discussion

- Member asked if the CGC tracks where No. 1 grade durum is coming from geographically as the results presented are not reflective of what is being seen in the country.
 - The CGC is able to review where samples are received from, however, the report does not provide a breakdown geographically
- Member asked if the CGC was considering other options for obtaining grain samples to maintain reflective representation due to the declining number of samples received by the Harvest Sample Program.
 - This is under discussion as we look at approaches to make the program as accessible as possible.
 - Harvest Sample Program results traditionally are in line with what is exported from the country.
 - Quarterly quality reports are listed under 'Science' on our website.
- Member inquired how Harvest Sample Program is matching to what is being collected by Cereals Canada in respect to grading.

- The CGC has received a limited number of composite samples from Cereals Canada.
- The CGC has regular discussions on the progress of functionality analysis, and the overall parameters are in line. When there are differences, it is generally due to different instruments.
- Member asked if samples have been received for flax or smaller crops.
 - Very limited samples have been received, and information will be shared with the member following the meeting.

7. Pulses Advisory Committee report

Lead: Joey Vanneste

For information

- Small lentils: 2024 was hot and dry and led some producers to harvest smaller-sized lentils. Producers contacted us seeking clarification on the dockage determination process as small lentils were being included in dockage. It was agreed that the CGC should undertake a scientific study and provide findings back to the Pulse Advisory Committee and standards committees.
 - The advisory committee shared the view to maintain the current dockage assessment.
- Lentils contrasting classes and colours: Noting a wide range of colours of lentil seed coat and cotyledon. New lentil varieties with novel seed coats are being submitted for registration and the CGC was tasked with reviewing and clarifying definitions for contrasting classes and contrasting colours. The advisory committee had a common perspective to remove all reference to contrasting classes and replace with contrasting colours.
- Green peas bleached guide: the photo illustrating bleached green peas has been removed from the web version of the Official Grain Grading Guide due to variations in colour displays. Printed copies are available and can be obtained by emailing QAStandards-NormesAQ@grainscanada.gc.ca.

For discussion

- Member seeking information if prints are automatically sent out to third-party graders and if they actively look for them as it seems some are not aware of grading changes.
 - The CGC will send them on request at no charge but there is no automatic mailing. Information on how to request is on the CGC's website. Private companies do actively reach out and request.
- Member asked if the CGC has any results through the Harvest Sample Program on chickpeas.
 - Very few samples have been received, and many still in the field. No data to share at this time.

Action items

- A motion will be brought forward at the spring 2026 meeting to change the lentils grading factor for contrasting classes to contrasting colours.

8. Barley and Other Cereal Grains Advisory Committee report

Lead: Evan Thomas

For information

- Comparative analysis of ZoomAgri: The CGC presented findings from a recent study comparing traditional DNA-based methods with the ZoomAgri artificial intelligence-driven image analysis system for assessing barley varietal purity. Full study results are published on the CGC's website.

- Pearling quality of hulless barley: Presented a preliminary study examining the pearling quality of Canadian barley varieties in response to increased Japanese demand for barley as a rice extender. Compared 2-row and 6-row, covered and hulless barley types. 6-row barley with smaller and softer kernels generally perform better for pearling.
- Heated in corn: Room to improve national consistency in assessments as heat damage can lead to downgrading and is significant because of strict tolerances. The CGC proposed developing a printed visual guide to complement current definitions.

Action items

- Further discussion on heated corn and damage will be brought forward at the spring meeting.

9. Oilseeds Advisory Committee report

Lead: Evan Thomas

For information

- Broken and small canola project:
 - Phase 2 work was done this year. Analysis showed that there was no effect on the quality profile of different samples due to sieve size. Using a larger sieve size increased dockage content while it did not change the quality of the material.
 - The CGC recommended to accept the research results and close this project.
- Sprouted in canola: 2024 had high levels of sprouted in canola and a trade memo was issued to clarify assessments. More samples will be tested before contemplating changes to the grading standards.
- Brown damaged canola seed: presentation given on Free Fatty Acids (FFA) in brown damaged canola seed. Analysis indicates that FFA increased with levels of brown seeds, leading to refining being affected.
- Canola quality *Brassica juncea*: New line of Liberty Link GM canola that will be available in the United States within the next year or 2 that is able to grow better than traditional canola in drier growing areas.
 - Visually indistinguishable from oriental mustard and grading procedures may have to be updated to accommodate this.
 - There is a potential for market disruption if genetically modified material is detected in mustard shipments.
 - Only way to verify it as canola is a wet chemistry test.
 - Item will remain a topic for future meetings.

For discussion

- Member questions about different canola profiles from stress versus moisture sprouting: if there is an increase in cost for processing oil if the seed is oxidized and if longer storage time leads to higher oxidization.
 - The CGC confirmed that there are differences seen, particularly with stress sprouting where there is more brown seed and a lot of oxidization.
 - Any time something is removed during the refining process, there is an increase to cost.
 - Longer storage time leads to more oxidization and will continue to increase over time as once oxidization begins it cannot be stopped.

- Member raised a concern about canola contamination in the mustard industry as much of Canada's mustard exports come from Saskatchewan crops.

Action items

- Accept the research results and close the broken and small canola project.
- The CGC is studying more samples of brown damaged canola seed and sprouted canola and a report will be shared at the spring meeting.

10. Wheat Advisory Committee report

Leads: Evan Thomas and Dr. Bin Xiao Fu

- Shrunk, broken, and total shrunk and broken: provided overview of report and information on the research project that we conducted over the winter on shrunk kernels. The CGC is proposing that the shrunk tolerances be updated to accurately reflect the grades. The advisory committee was in favour of staggered tolerances, but data on broken kernels in conjunction with broken will need to be reviewed.
- Variety requirements in No. 4 grades of eastern wheats: referenced the *Canada Grain Act* that states unregistered wheat varieties are only eligible to receive the lowest grade by regulation. In eastern Canada, feed is a class and not a grade, and the registered variety requirements is in place for the No. 4 grade. This seems incorrect based on what's in the Act. The CGC outlined a possible change to the No. 4 grade of eastern wheat classes that will be discussed at the variety registration meetings this winter.
- Standard prints for mildew in Canada Eastern Hard Red Winter (CEHRW): revisited discussion. For the time being, CEHRW will continue to be assessed against the CESRW standard, but we'll look for additional material to potentially create a print for CEHRW.

For discussion

- Discussion on thousand kernel weights, levels of shrunk in other countries, and whether it affects our competitiveness, although thousand kernel weight is not a grading factor.
- Member question if all seeds are tested or if it is just 50% or greater of seed for thousand kernel weight.
 - The CGC confirmed the broken kernels (less than three quarters) are pulled out before testing.
- Member question on why broken and shrunk are together as a grading factor, as they are different.
 - The CGC is looking to potentially separate the 2 tolerances and will bring forward for future discussion.
- Discussion on science versus market acceptance and that the market at times can trump the science aspect.

Action items

- An update on the shrunk, broken, and total shrunk and broken in CWAD project will be brought forward at the spring meeting.
- Additional information on the separation of broken and shrunk grading factors will be discussed at a future meeting.

11. Canada Western Red Spring (CWRS) and Hard Vitreous Kernel (HVK) working group

Lead: Derek Bunkowsky

- **Presenter: Elaine Sopiwnyk, Cereals Canada**

For information

- Provided overview of working group meeting that was held on September 3, 2025, and information received from key importers to date.
- Questions were presented to Japanese millers were on how HVK is assessed in those markets and how the kernel appearance impacts the quality.
- Based on the responses and research conducted, HVK is important from a visual perspective but not based on science.
- On average, each year HVK is the number one downgrading factor for CWRS. If it was removed as a factor, there is a high likelihood that key importers, Japan in particular, would make it a contract specification, potentially leading to a 2-tiered system.
- During this year's New Crop Mission while visiting these key importers, the CGC will obtain further information and report back to the HVK working group.

For discussion

- It was discussed that exporters may have issues with segregating grain for specific markets, however members mentioned that many segregations already exist within the current system.
- Members inquired if there are other markets that have expressed concerns with HVK.

Action items

- An update from the HVK working group will be provided at the spring 2026 meeting.

12. Darkened kernels in CWAD

Lead: Derek Bunkowsky

For information

- Spoke on the challenges of Canada Western Amber Durum (CWAD) in the west as the current assessment procedure for darkened kernels is leading to considerable downgrading on account of this factor.
- The CGC provided a presentation on the results of expedited research on this issue.
- The CGC is proposing to look at the grading factor and clarify the difference between severe midge and darkened kernels in the Official Grain Grading Guide.
- The CGC is proposing to issue clarification quickly on how this should be assessed before possibly making a change to the Official Grain Grading Guide at a future meeting. Checking with members to ensure the timing of this clarification works for the sector.
- Advised that with a trade memo, darkened kernels would be assessed as "smudge". If there are issues with this change in grading direction being applied consistently at primary elevators, the solution for

producers would be to send the sample for Final Quality Determination and the CGC will ensure that it is graded correctly.

For discussion

- Members raised concerns on perception by those that have already sold. Concluded that this change is being made in good faith to protect everyone going forward.
- Members discussed and agreed that darkened kernels do not belong in the severe midge category and that timeliness is important.
- Members agreed that a change should be made before end of harvest this year before the issue continues to grow and affect producers and exporters.

Action items

- Motion carried: "Recommendation for the Canadian Grain Commission to issue a trade memo on Friday, November 7, 2025 in regard to grading for darkened kernels in CWAD."
- Further discussion on changes to the Official Grain Grading Guide will be put on the agenda for the spring 2026 meeting.

13. Grain grading alignment

Lead: David Hunt

For discussion

- Presented an overview of the working group along with the proposed membership and timelines. The CGC is seeking support for the recommendation to proceed with development of the group and approach.
- The working group will assist in identifying potential alignment points, followed by exploring comparisons and available data.
- Once a formal proposal is put forward, the regulatory aspect, including widespread consultation, would begin. The CGC recognizes there may be no alignment and there is no preconceived goal in establishing this working group.
- Membership would be selected by reaching out to chosen stakeholder organizations for nominations.

For discussion

- Member asked how the cost benefit analysis would be done and by who, highlighting the need for transparency and relevance of data points.
 - The CGC is looking to do the analysis internally, however, if another level of expertise is required, the CGC would look outside of the organization.
- Members questioned if this could be broadened in scope to more than just wheat stakeholder group representation and if there would be representation from BC in the working group.
 - The intent is to keep the membership number reasonable. This is not to reduce input, but to effectively and efficiently bring forward feedback and recommendations to the standards

- committee. There will be significant discussion at the standards committee followed by public consultation on any potential changes.
- Some concerns were raised about the potential effort and no outcome. However, members are in favour of the approach and creation of the working group.

Action items

- Working group to be formed in late 2025 and will hold their first meeting in January 2026.

14. Technology advancement framework

Lead: Derek Bunkowsky

For information

- A progress update on the framework was presented to members.
- To date, 8 proposals have been received by domestic and international companies, with 4 continuing through the framework and 4 rejected.
- The CGC has already received the equipment for 1 project and have begun to do an assessment. This project is focused strictly on wheat and looking at 5 common and specific grading factors. The goal is to test assessment accuracy.

For discussion

- Members asked about resource allocation for these projects and if the CGC is providing samples.
 - There is no predetermined amount that will be allocated.
 - The CGC is encouraging companies to work with partners outside to train equipment. The CGC can evaluate and provide feedback after. The CGC is not providing a sample library, but it gives the opportunity to use the technology early and look at the application for its own work. It allows the CGC as a regulator to be involved with the development.

15. Travel policies and guidelines

Lead: Tawhid Sarker

For information

- Presentation provided to members on policies and guidelines for travel for standards committee meetings.

16. Other

Lead: David Hunt

For information

- Chief Commissioner reminded members of the update that was emailed on October 27, 2025, which included the announcement to postpone the increase of fees as well as information about the new email subscription service.
- Advised members of spring meeting tentative date.

Action items

- A survey will be sent to members to confirm preferred date of the spring meeting.

17. Terms of committee members

Lead: David Hunt

For information

- There are no appointments up for renewal.
- Thanked member whose third and final term is expiring in November. We'll reach out to the organization to initiate the appointment process.

18. Closing remarks

Lead: David Hunt

For information

- Thanked members for their participation and input.
- Reminded that we're still accepting samples for the Harvest Sample Program and asked members to encourage those in their regions to send samples.

19. Adjournment