



Western Standards Committee record of discussion and recommendations

Date: November 5, 2024

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

Location: Canadian Grain Commission
Winnipeg, MB

Members

Description

Canadian Grain Commission

David Hunt (Chairperson)
Derek Bunkowsky
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

*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

*Tala Mobayen
*Lynne Sweeney
*Robert Tkatchuk

Canadian Pulse and Special Crops Trade Association
Western Grain Elevator Association
Canadian Grain & Oilseed Exporters Association

Producers of western grain

Justin Bell
Steven Donald
Jean Harrington
Fiona Jochum
*Sean Stanford
*Shane Stokke
Shanna Stolhandske-Dale
Glenn Tait
Beverly Wieben

Alberta producer (Alberta Grains)
Saskatchewan producer (Canadian Federation of Agriculture)
Saskatchewan producer
Manitoba producer (Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association)
Alberta producer (Alberta Grains)
Saskatchewan producer (Flax Council of Canada)
Saskatchewan producer
Saskatchewan producer (Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission)
Alberta producer (Alberta Pulse Growers)

Additional

Ian Armer
Robert Chapman

Terminal Elevator Association
Inland Terminal Association of Canada

James Dunlop

Canola Council of Canada

Observers

Veronique Barthet

Canadian Grain Commission

Gino Castonguay

Canadian Grain Commission

Shanell Dupras

Canadian Grain Commission

Melissa Finch

Canadian Grain Commission

Jon Friesen

Canadian Grain Commission

Eve Froehlich

Canadian Grain Commission

Bin Xiao Fu

Canadian Grain Commission

Christianne Hacault

Canadian Grain Commission

Marta Izydorczyk

Canadian Grain Commission

Lonny McKague

Canadian Grain Commission

Robert Nay

Canadian Grain Commission

Patty Rosher

Canadian Grain Commission

*Aiden Sander

Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission

Evan Thomas

Canadian Grain Commission

*Jacqueline Van Acker

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Ning Wang

Canadian Grain Commission

Kris Wonitowy

Canadian Grain Commission

Regrets

Chad Doerksen

Saskatchewan producer (Saskatchewan Pulse Growers)

Jon Fehr

Saskatchewan producer (Canadian Canola Grower Association)

Gregg Fotheringham

Manitoba producer (Manitoba Crop Alliance)

Avtar Virk

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

*indicates virtual participation

Recommendations and action items from this meeting

- Motion was carried for the Canadian Grain Commission to establish a scope document including a cost benefit/economic analysis, considerate of work to be undertaken in relation to shrunken and broken, consistent with work completed on test weight, for the purpose of investigating and making a recommendation as to the alignment of primary and export standards on all classes of wheat, to be presented at the spring Western Standards Committee meeting.
- The Canadian Grain Commission will continue to collect feedback and do consultation on the concept of a Grain Standards Advisory Committee Open Forum and report back to the standards committees in the spring of 2025.

Chairperson's comments

Lead: David Hunt

Summary

- Welcome to members and asked them to introduce themselves

Approval of the November 5, 2024 Western Standards Committee agenda

Lead: David Hunt

Action items

- Meeting agenda was approved.

Approval of the April 4, 2024 Western Standards Committee meeting minutes

Lead: David Hunt

Action items

- Meeting minutes were approved.

Business arising

Lead: David Hunt

Summary

- Will no longer ask for motions to accept advisory committee reports and instead the reports will just be presented for member information and comments.

Regulatory process

Lead: Eve Froehlich

Summary

- Proposing new approach for grain grading regulatory changes
- Received feedback from stakeholders that they wanted more consultations, economic impact analyses, and clarity on the principles for decision making from the Canadian Grain Commission.
- Will now be performing a Regulatory Impact Analysis for grading changes.
- Regulatory Impact Analysis includes a cost-benefit analysis that has different requirements for changes depending on level of cost.
- The Canadian Grain Commission will continue to consult with standards committees on all grading changes.
- Low impact grading changes will require a qualitative cost-benefit analysis and may include additional pre-consultation.
- Significant impact grading changes will require a quantitative cost-benefit analysis and may include additional pre-consultation and pre-publication in the Canada Gazette, Part I.

Technology advancement framework

Lead: Eve Froehlich

Summary

- The Canadian Grain Commission developed a technology advancement framework to facilitate engagement and collaboration with technology companies, which outlines the approach and guiding principles for making decisions.

- During consultations for our Science Strategy, many respondents wanted to move from visual inspection towards more rapid and objective methods for grain grading.
- The framework is available on the Canadian Grain Commission website and is being communicated to stakeholders. There will be a comprehensive strategy to engage with technology companies.
- There are no plans at this time to adopt AI grain assessment tools. If one comes through that is feasible, there would be consultation with the sector and staff before implementation.

For discussion

- Member asked how the Canadian Grain Commission is prioritizing resources.
 - o Looking at strategies for how to prioritize requests and that will be part of our plan over the next few years.
 - o Confirmed that relevancy for the Canadian agriculture sector is one of our main key assessment factors.
- Clarification was requested on the use of the term “official” Canadian grain grading system.
 - o Clarified that the official system is where we provide official inspection services, like the ports. Unofficial uses are technologies like ones being used off the combine and at primary elevators.
 - o Members noted this distinction seems to be incongruent as there are cases where unofficial samples are used by the Canadian Grain Commission to make Final Quality Determination assessments from producer grain deliveries at Canadian Grain Commission licensed primary elevators.
- Member commented that regardless of the Canadian Grain Commission’s adoption of technologies, grain companies may decide to adopt them as risk management tools.

Western crop report

Lead: Kris Wonitowy

Summary

- Harvest is virtually complete across the western Prairies.
- Updates on Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba harvest progress were provided.
- The Canadian Grain Commission uses samples from our Harvest Sample Program to make crop quality data available to marketers to promote the sale of Canadian grain, and to confirm Canada's ability to deliver consistent, high-quality grain from year to year. The Grain Research Laboratory also uses these samples for scientific research.
- As of October 21, the Canadian Grain Commission has received 6390 samples with 64% of samples being cereal crops, 26% being oilseeds and 10% being pulses.

For discussion

- Member asked if there’s work being done to better understand how much cultivar breeding, timely applications of fungicide and pesticide, etc. has an impact on final results.
 - o Confirmed the Canadian Grain Commission does collaborate with agronomists and breeders.
 - o Member asked if this information gets shared widely with growers and the industry.
 - Confirmed agronomists usually share the information with producers during their meetings. Always looking for ways to communicate results more widely.
- Member asked if any results on test weight were variety specific.

- Confirmed we have some results from last year that look at varieties but don't have results back from this year to report on individual varieties. Harvest Sample Program has been expanded to include some variety-specific information.
- Members commented that some producers are interested in the Harvest Sample Program but see the process as cumbersome and outdated, which discourages participation.
 - Thanked members for their comments on how to streamline the Harvest Sample Program.

Oilseed Advisory Committee report

Lead: Evan Thomas

For information and discussion

- Broken and small canola project: Grain Research Laboratory worked with producer samples last winter and found that broken seed leads to lower oil content and an increase in free fatty acids.
 - Member asked about the scope of the work being done and how much broken seed can be mixed into sound seed before it has an impact on the end product.
 - Shared this is what the Grain Research Laboratory is currently working on and it will be a multi-year project.
- Sprouting in canola project: noticed sprouted canola seeds in harvest samples with highest concentration from Peace River area of Alberta. The Canadian Grain Commission issuing a trade memo clarifying the image and definition for assessing sprouted canola as there have been cases where the assessment of canola with a slightly cracked seed hull being graded as sprouted would result in significant unnecessary downgrades.

Pulses Advisory Committee report

Lead: Evan Thomas

For information and discussion

- Small lentils: received inquiries from producers where small lentils are removed and being assessed as dockage. Discussion on the use of certain sieves during the cleaning process and how they may filter out small lentils. It was noted that changing from a 9-round hole sieve to an 8-round hole sieve would lead to more foreign material being left in, which is not acceptable for exporters.
 - Issue also discussed 8 to 10 years ago and same conclusion was reached.
 - A small study will be conducted this winter.

Barley and Other Cereal Grains Advisory Committee report

Lead: Kris Wonitowy

For information

- Degree of soundness - Rye and triticale: found it helpful to list the degree of soundness at the start of each column in the Official Grain Grading Guide for a consistent flow when grading a sample of grain using the grade determination tables. Feel it's necessary to retain as is. The committee doesn't have concerns with the existing degree of soundness.

- Degree of soundness, colour characteristics – Oats: the Canadian Grain Commission will ensure consultation with industry is done before making any changes, but there are no plans to change this at this time.

Wheat Advisory Committee report

Lead: Kris Wonitowy

For information and discussion

- Sprouted tolerance in Canada Eastern Soft Red Winter (CESRW) wheat: asked to research samples with low Falling Number but no visible signs of sprouted. The 2024 sample review is complete, and it appears that No. 1 and 2 will ensure a Falling Number of over 275 seconds and all samples that had low Falling Number had visible sprouting.
- Degree of soundness: found it helpful to list the degree of soundness at the start of each column in the Official Grain Grading Guide for a consistent flow when grading a sample of grain using the grade determination tables. Feel it's necessary to retain as is. Work will continue to ensure grading standards are science based.
- Hard vitreous kernel (HVK) project: presented on the relation of HVK to Canada Western Red Spring (CWRS) wheat. HVK has minimal impact on most end-use quality factors. Only in extreme circumstances when low protein is coupled with very low HVK, flour water absorption can fall below the normal CWRS range.
- Standard print for mildew: in the preliminary stages of developing a standard print to assess mildew with a focus on CWRS and Canada Western Amber Durum (CWAD). Exploring photography techniques and hope to have a first version to share for the next standards committee meetings.
- Procedure for shrunken and broken: an industry stakeholder reached out to confirm if there is an approved method using the 4.5 slotted hand sieve. The Official Grain Grading Guide only references the Carter Dockage Tester machine method and there's concern some elevators don't have the machine. Tests were conducted using hand sieves but found discrepancies between hand sieves and the machine method. It's understood elevators need a quick assessment option. If a hand sieve is used, careful consideration to the direction of the slots is required. The Canadian Grain Commission continues to use the Carter Dockage Tester at export and for Final Quality Determination. A trade memo was released clarifying the existing process.
 - o Member discussion on the variances between hand sieves and Carter Dockage Tester and if there will be a procedure for hand sieves.
 - Confirmed samples are being gathered to look into this further. The study will focus on standardizing a consistent approach for using a hand sieve in place of a Carter Dockage Tester. The priority of the project at the moment will be shrunken procedure for CWAD.
 - o Member discussion and questions around the scope of the project and the issues and different degrading factors each year. Questioning if prioritizing 1 issue is a good use of time and resources.
 - o Member noted test weight should be taken into consideration for this project as it has ties to shrunken and broken.
 - o Members stated that they would like to better understand the intentions and scope of the shrunken and broken project for proper resource allocation.

- It was suggested that the Canadian Grain Commission should collect large numbers of samples each year when a degrading factor is having an impact so ongoing research can be done.

Action item

- Motion for the Canadian Grain Commission to establish a scope document including a cost benefit/economic analysis, considerate of work to be undertaken in relation to shrunken and broken, consistent with work completed on test weight, for the purpose of investigating and making a recommendation as to the alignment of primary and export standards on all classes of wheat, to be presented at the spring Western Standards Committee meeting.
 - Motion was carried.

Grain Standards Advisory Committee discussion

Lead: Derek Bunkowsky

Summary

- Presentation given on the concept of transitioning from Grain Standards Advisory Committees to a Grain Standards Advisory Open Forum for member feedback.
 - Members raised concerns an open forum may invite poor or uninformed opinions into technical discussions
 - Agreed that this is one of the main concerns if this process were to move forward.
 - Members commented that an open forum concept may lead to longer standards committee meetings.
 - Members flagged that timing of agenda call-out under current plan would be during harvest.
 - The possibility of changing the timing of these meetings and standards committee meetings was raised.
 - Members were encouraged to give their feedback.

Action item

- The Canadian Grain Commission will continue to collect feedback and do consultation on the concept of a Grain Standards Advisory Committee Open Forum and report back to the standards committees in the spring of 2025.

Terms of committee members

Lead: David Hunt

Summary

- One member is coming up to the end of their term. The Chair thanked them for their time and service.

Other

Lead: David Hunt

Summary

- It was noted that ministerial appointments have experienced some delays, which is leading to some challenges.

- The Chair commented the Canadian Grain Commission is doing what it can to move the process along by flagging requirements for ministerial appointments as early as possible. Currently a backlog of appointments in the government. A new process is in place and the backlog is starting to reduce.

Closing remarks

Lead: David Hunt

Summary

- The Chair thanked members for their participation and input and staff who were involved.

Adjournment

Lead: David Hunt

Action items

- Motion was carried to adjourn the meeting