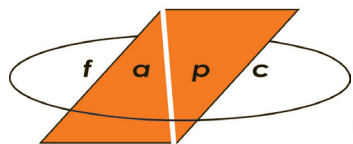


Food & Agricultural Products Center



FLASH!!

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY™

October 5, 2005

USDA Announces Equivalency for ASL Program

STILLWATER, Okla. – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service announced that its U.S. Accredited Seed Laboratory, or ASL, program is equivalent to the Canadian Seed Laboratory Accreditation and Audit Protocol, according to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency’s, or CFIA, Plant Production Division.

“The recognition of equivalency will allow seed testing laboratories accredited in the ASL Program to be recognized by the CFIA, and seed test results from these laboratories may be used by accredited graders to grade and label seed with a Canadian pedigreed grade name,” said Nurhan Dunford, oil/oilseed chemist for the Food & Agricultural Products Center.

To acquire official recognition, laboratories must apply to the CFIA, and the laboratory manager or supervising analyst will then need to be evaluated on the specifics and procedures required under the Canadian methods and procedures for testing seed.

The ASL program is a voluntary, user-fee service available to seed testing laboratories.

The program, announced in April 2005, was developed by a task force which included representatives from the following seed industry associations:

- 1) Association of Official Seed Analysis,
- 2) Society of Commercial Seed Technologist,
- 3) Association of American Seed Control Officials,

- 4) Association of Official Seed Certification Agencies,
- 5) American Seed Trade Association, and
- 6) USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service.

The objective of the ASL program is “to expand the choices for seed laboratories and provide an alternative program to current accreditations for U.S. laboratories.”

It is expected that ASL program will increase the number of U.S. accredited seed laboratories, thereby enhancing seed movement both domestically and globally, through the verification process.

Adherence to the program requirements and quality standards of the USDA Process Verified Program will further enhance the quality and consistency of seed testing in the United States.

Seed testing laboratories, which meet all requirements of this program and successfully pass a USDA Process Verified Program Audit, are allowed to represent themselves as an U.S. Accredited Seed Laboratory.

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service conducts independent process verification audits of the seed laboratory’s program documentation and procedures with regard to the ASL program.

“BioDiagnostics Inc., in River Falls, Wis. is the first seed laboratory accredited through the ASL program,” Dunford said. “The scope of the accredi-

tation includes grasses, cereals and other crops, legumes, vegetables, flowers and herbs.”

BioDiagnostics Inc. provides services, such as ELISA Testing, Standard Seed Testing, DNA Testing, Analytical Chemistry, Herbicide Tolerance Testing and Isozyme Electrophoresis Testing.

More information about the ASL Program can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/arc/asl.htm or by

contacting Richard C. Payne, chief of the AMS Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch, by calling (704) 810-8870 or writing to 801 Summit Crossing Place, Suite C, Gastonia, NC 28054-2193.

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