

Developing a Coexistence Plan for Alfalfa Hay in Eastern Canada

A Value Chain Workshop
Wednesday October 24, 2012
Delta Kitchener-Waterloo
105 King Street, Kitchener, Ontario

Breakout Table(s) #3 - COEXISTENCE PRINCIPLES FOR ALFALFA HAY PRODUCED FOR EXPORT

Some participants in all three breakout sessions, wanted it made clear that they do not support the commercialization of Roundup Ready alfalfa in any region of Canada.

1. What are the most important export markets for Canadian Alfalfa Hay and Hay Products?

- The United States, Japan, China, Arab States, Korea and Taiwan
- Thailand and Vietnam are expected to be emerging markets

2. What is the regulatory status in those countries for the import of GM alfalfa hay and hay products? (for food and feed)

- Roundup Ready Alfalfa has food and feed approvals in Canada, U.S. (also environmental release in Canada and the U.S.), Korea, Japan, Philippines, Mexico, Singapore, (China expected fall 2014)

3. What is the willingness of buyers in those countries, to accept GM alfalfa hay?

- This reflects U.S. hay exporter experience because Canada does not currently produce or export GM alfalfa hay. Canadian experience is mostly with seed, and in that case, many customers are requiring declarations that the product is GM free.
- China tests hay for GM on arrival, and most sellers supply signed a document stating that the seller is complying with requirements
- Many buyers want declaration that the product is GM free and some also request a declaration of origin.
- The USDA has developed a Compliance Agreement for organic sellers to use to support exports – this is because most national governments want to deal with national governments but organics in the United States are regulated by the State governments.
- Some customers (Japan) specifically request GM alfalfa hay because they want weed-free, pure alfalfa.

4. **What is the potential for the introduction of low levels of GM alfalfa to conventional or organic hay and hay products for export through production practises on farm, or production practises of others and through processing, storage, transportation etc.**
 - GM content in non GM seed supplies
 - poor inventory management practices
 - physical admixture on farm
 - letting the stand bloom too long
 - poor mechanical sanitation of machinery (seeders, swathers, balers, wagons, trucks etc.)
 - lack of proper (segregated) stacking/storage procedures on farm and at transfer points
 - improper field selection for planting

5. **What are the steps that could be taken by the hay producer to minimize the presence of GM hay in conventional or organic hay or hay products for export?**
 - Proper cutting timing (bloom management) is an essential part of best management practises
 - Seed companies should provide manuals and training for producers for best management practises - to include field selection, buffer zones, seed handling and storage, machinery sanitation procedures etc.
 - Seed companies should ensure that compliance audits are done to ensure that growers are employing the best management practises (perhaps through ISO auditors etc.)

6. **What are the steps that could be taken by other components in the system (e.g. transportation, storage, processing) to minimize the presence of GM alfalfa in conventional or organic hay or hay products for export?**
 - Best management practises should also be developed and manuals and training provided for these components of the system.

7. What is the capacity of the value chain to undertake those steps?

- It is being done in the U.S. now....
- If the financial return is there, most things are possible (return needs to be there to be done correctly)
- Organic hay exports may have very different requirements because the certification processes differ from State to State and Province to Province

8. What enforcement measures would be required?

- The buyers typically do a good job of enforcing this and proper contracts between buyers and sellers will support it
- If you are an exporter of hay now, you have a lot of requirements already (likely including a contract)