

Kurt Shmon, Imperial Seeds

Hello. My name is Kurt Shmon. I am the President of Imperial Seeds, a Forage and Turf Seed Company in Western Canada. We are a strong exporter at Imperial Seed. We contract forage and turf seed for companies around the world and we are strongly focused on Europe and the Americas. The production contracts that we obtain from these companies are contracted with producers across Western Canada. The seed is then brought to Winnipeg for processing, packaging and testing and then shipped to the contracting company.

Most of our species are perennial plants that cover three to five years of production. Our main species of production are alfalfa, timothy, birdsfoot trefoil, clovers and perennial ryegrass.

As we listen to the news, we hear that Canada has just signed a free trade agreement with the European Union. In the last five years, the forage and turf seed industry in Canada has averaged in excess of over \$20 million worth of forage and turf seed exports into Europe. We are all aware that Europe currently has a zero tolerance for any non-approved events. We all recall the Triffid flax issue. One seed was found and bang it shut down the industry. A lot of producers in Western Canada – across Canada – were hurt with that, and ultimately the cost of the loss was passed right back to the producer as markets dropped.

A lot of the contracts that we are currently starting to sign with our European customers do have clauses that state that if any GMO species are found in the seed, the seed will be returned at the seller's cost and our contracts cancelled. Our industry has been faced with many challenges of GMO Canola and at this time we've been able to win a lot of those because it is noticeable in the field. We can also do a good job of herbicide use in taking it out, but it is still an issue.

Alfalfa, like all species is not only seed but can be an undesirable in other crops. A study conducted by CFIA noted that alfalfa was an impurity in 468 samples of different crop kinds. Any of those samples could have the Roundup Ready gene in it and could be sold in Canada or possibly exported to another country.

Canada's science based approach works well for domestic seed marketers: the Monsanto, the Syngentas, the Bayer Crop Sciences. What does it do for the producer? This approach does not take into consideration what producers want. Nor does it address what the market wants. These are the two most important issues and they are absent. Producers want to grow what they can market and in the case of Roundup Ready Alfalfa in Canada, producers do not want it and it is proven by many of my colleagues here today.

It would be prudent of our industry not to jeopardize our members' rights to make a livelihood and err on the side of caution. Introduction of products prior to their approval in major trading partners' markets.

Coexistence will not exist if Roundup Ready Alfalfa is released for sale in Canada. It will destroy the forage and turf seed market in Europe and other markets that have zero tolerance for non-approved events.

The value that Roundup Ready Alfalfa brings to a select few is tremendously overshadowed by the value of exports of alfalfa to non-GMO zones, the agronomic benefit of alfalfa and to the economic benefit of the organic value chain. The vast majority of Canadian farmers and our customers do not want this product. When will Canada listen to what Canadians want?