

Phil Woodhouse, Canadian Organic Growers

I want to thank you Rob for doing a great job of facilitating this event today. I'd like to thank the Canadian Seed Trade Association for inviting me to be here and putting together this event.

As representing the Canadian Organic Growers, we have some dire concerns about these products being released into Canada. We have a \$2 billion industry that is 100% consumer driven, that has seen growth year over year for the last 20 years, and I'm not sure our consumers are willing to accept any levels of GMO contamination of forages.

The good news story about organic livestock agriculture is that some of our best customers are former vegetarians and I'm certain that they will not be happy about the GMO contamination of the feed that's going in to those animals.

Another thing that I see here is that this puts at risk the Western Canadian seed industry. There is no checkpoint at the Manitoba Ontario border and I know myself that I have neighbours that have gone to Agribition and on a detour through Saskatchewan have picked up a tote of alfalfa seed and brought it home. Agriculture Canada didn't know anything about that, and I'm pretty sure that seed can flow equally as well in the other direction. I think from a marketing standpoint from the seed industry, if it's not allowed in Canada, they're going to have an easier job selling it. If it's allowed in Eastern Canada, those seed associations are going to bear the costs of trying to sell that to Europe.

What I understand now is that Europe can now test to the level of 0.1% contamination for trace amounts of GE or genetically engineered ingredients. That has completely shut down the organic flax trade to Europe.

As far as Ontario seed production goes, I do know of almost half a dozen organic producers who do combine some alfalfa and sell it as certified organic common alfalfa. I also know of some conventional producers who do produce 10 to 20 acres every year and I do believe it goes through Speare's in Harriston as common seed. I also know conventional hay producers who leave their hay crop standing full season. Instead of planting green manure or a plow down they'll just use the hay crop in the final year and they'll turn it under in September. It looks pretty ugly, but he's a conventional producer and it works for him. He grows some incredible crops after that and it's really helped out in his rotation.

Not to be a stick in the mud, but I feel that the organization that I represent, and the consumers I represent, we're going to be digging our heels in pretty hard on this issue.