

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

Facilitator's Notes and Summary

Additional Points Made During the Concluding Session

- On review of the Principles of Coexistence developed by the Coexistence Steering Committee, some of the participants in the workshop noted that not all of the stakeholders in the Alfalfa value chain support commercialization of Roundup Ready Alfalfa, and will continue to actively advocate against it. They stressed that a coexistence plan will only need to be implemented IF commercialization occurs.
- There was concern that Ontario farmers who support the technology were not present at the meeting. Is that because there are no Ontario farmers who support the technology? How can the commercializing company demonstrate that there is demand for the product in Eastern Canada?
 - A response was that there are farmers who will buy the technology if and when it becomes available, but they do not feel that this is an urgent issue, so chose to use their time on the farm.
- A question arose about the authority to implement both the Coexistence Plan and the Best Management Practices. How will it be ensured that they are fully implemented and enforced?
 - The idea was that the BMPs would be part of the contracts that would be signed by growers when they purchase the technology.
- There was a discussion and debate about when cutting of GM alfalfa should occur. The suggestions ranged from before there is any bloom to before 25% bloom. This will be the subject of best management practice development, and the coexistence plan should refer to "cutting early".
- Dairy Farmers need to be part of the process.

Next Steps

The Meeting Report

- The meeting report (proceedings) will be made available to all of the participants in the workshop within the next 10 days
- Participants will have 10 days to make corrections and provide points of clarification
- The final meeting report will be made publicly available on CSTA's website

The Coexistence Plan

- Results from the workshop (discussion groups) will be summarized to draft the guidelines for coexistence.
- There will be one coexistence plan for all production systems. It will characterize each production system and identify the areas where best management practises will be required.
- The draft will be reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee and then circulated to participants at the workshop and to others (e.g. Dairy Farmers) who were not involved in the workshop.
- Comments and suggestions must be received one month from receiving the draft. After that, the plan will be final.
- An “expert” group of Eastern forage specialists, farmers, end users, processors etc. will be assembled to develop the best management practises using the coexistence plan structure.
- The best management practises will be made widely available through CSTA’s website, and will be provided to the developer and the commercializing companies with the strong request that they be incorporated into grower contracts.