

Decision Failed on New OECD Standards for Hybrid Oilseed Rape

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The Annual Meeting on the OECD Seed Schemes failed to decide on new standards for the varietal certification of hybrid oilseed rape.

In the year 2001 OECD had proposed stricter standards for the varietal certification of hybrid oilseed rape. On the basis of the OECD proposal and after several years of temporary experiments the European Union raised the certifications standards in the European Union. After consultation with EU rapeseed breeders and in accordance with their views two items were modified:

1. In crops to produce basic seed of parental lines using the cytoplasmic male sterility method the minimum male sterility of the seed-bearing parent line was raised from 98% to 99%;
2. In crops to produce certified seed of hybrid varieties using the cytoplasmic male sterility method the minimum varietal purity of the pollen parent line was raised from 99.5% to 99.7%.

These changes had been discussed in the meeting of the OECD Advisory Group in January 2004. No objections were raised. In the September 2004 Annual Meeting, however, the Canadian delegates requested to maintain the old standards for the spring type of hybrid oilseed rape.

The representatives of the European Union would not follow the proposal to have different standards for the spring and the winter type since there had been no information on the Canadian position prior to the meeting. The matter was transferred into a working group to develop a compromise proposal for the next Annual Meeting on the OECD seeds schemes in 2005.