

**RESOLUTION 5-21  
FUSARIUM TESTING AFTER CLEANING**

**WHEREAS:** Fusarium Head Blight (FHB) is a fungal disease of cereal crops that affect kernel development, affecting yield and quality;

**WHEREAS:** FHB was added as a declared pest to Alberta's Agricultural Pest Act in 1999;

**WHEREAS:** The *Fusarium graminearum* Management Plan was released in 2002, hoping to limit the spread of the disease and lessen the economic impact;

**WHEREAS:** FHB was removed from the Act in early 2020 after many years of discussion to allow tolerance in crops, at which time seed cleaning plants required testing of the lot prior to cleaning;

**WHEREAS:** Currently some seed cleaning plants still require testing for FHB prior to cleaning in order to avoid transferring to other seed lots;

**WHEREAS:** The initial sample might not be representative of the seed lot due to improper sampling procedures;

**WHEREAS:** Seed can be sold as "Certified Fusarium Free", but still have a high concentration of the disease present due to improper sampling resulting in false negative test results;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**

**THAT ALBERTA'S AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARDS REQUEST**

that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada revise the labeling requirements to include "Fusarium graminearum Free" seed, in that the sample is taken at the seed plant after it is cleaned by the seed plant operator in order to ensure the quality of the certified seed, and test results, same as the germination test, will have to be provided to the buyer.

**SPONSORED BY:** County of Barrhead

**MOVED BY:**

**SECONDED BY:**

**CARRIED:**

**DEFEATED:**

**STATUS:** Federal

**DEPARTMENT:** Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

As FHB has been taken off the *Agricultural Pest Act*, there are now no regulations regarding the sale of infected seed or the introduction of the disease into a new field. In areas of the province where the local producers want to keep it out, they depend on buying Certified Fusarium Free seed. As seed treatments can offer some control, the disease will still be present in an area where it was not present before and can then be easily dispersed by the wind to neighbouring properties.

There is nothing stopping a producer from submitting a grain sample for FHB testing from a source that is known to be clean, but then bringing grain to the seed plant from a different field, knowing that it is infected. After cleaning, the certified grain will be labelled as “Fusarium Free”, which is inaccurate. Producers who’ve bought this seed have been extremely frustrated to find that their crop had the disease, but it was sold to them as being “Fusarium Free”.

Although different regions of the province have different levels of acceptance of FHB, buyers of seed must be aware of what they are buying and not be misled by false/inaccurate labeling. As seed plants are already doing germination testing before and after cleaning anyway, it would be easy to add the FHB test as a value-added service. By changing to a post-cleaning FHB test, we can have confidence in the quality of the certified seed being bought and sold.

**Taken from Alberta Seed Growers website ([www.seedalberta.ca](http://www.seedalberta.ca))**

### ***What is Certified Seed?***

Certified seed is seed that has followed very strict protocols and has been rigorously tested, as per Canadian seed system regulations, to ensure it retains its varietal and genetic benefits, purity and quality.

Any seed that is labelled “certified” has been:

- Purchased as pedigreed seed from a plant breeder or seed distributor with identifiable traits or characteristics
- Planted with equipment that has been meticulously cleaned between crop types and varieties, on a field with documented crop history
- Managed with proper separation distances to similar crop types
- Rogued by hand to remove volunteer weeds and genetic off-types
- Inspected by a third-party, in the field
- Harvested by equipment that has been meticulously cleaned between crop types and varieties
- Tested to uphold quality standards
- Verified by a CSGA-certified authority (where it came from, who grew it and how it was grown)

- Assigned a traceable seed certificate or blue tag

### ***Certified seed premiums***

Certified seed takes great effort to produce. Each step listed above requires additional time and resources, which in turn adds expense to the process. Producing certified seed may also require a royalty to be paid to the plant breeder of the seed. This is why certified seed comes at a premium cost.

Alberta farmers are investing in certified seed, despite the higher cost, because they realize the economic and agronomic benefits it provides them in the long run. Certified seed can also benefit the entire value chain, by creating higher quality (identity preserved) products that end users are willing to pay for.