



NEWS RELEASE

NEW INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTS LEGISLATION TO INCREASE PLANT BREEDERS' RIGHTS

For Immediate Release

Ottawa, December 09, 2013 – A group of leading Canadian farmer and agricultural organizations are joining forces to support Canadian government legislation intended to improve Plant Breeders' Rights in Canada.

Partners in Innovation, which represents farmer and agricultural groups across Canada, believes expanded seed variety protection for plant breeders will promote further investment in seed research and innovation to benefit farmers and the economy.

Today, Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Gerry Ritz, announced that legislation Bill C-18, the Canadian Agricultural Growth Act, has been introduced and given First Reading in the House of Commons. The Bill contains amendments to Canada's Plant Breeders' Rights Act to bring it into conformity with to the 1991 convention of the International Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV).

The *Partners in Innovation* commend Minister Ritz and the government for taking the steps needed to strengthen Plant Breeders' Rights in Canada. This will give both public and private sector plant breeders the confidence and ability to invest in developing improved varieties that deliver higher yields and better agronomics. This is critical for the future of our farmers and our agricultural industry's ability to compete in the global market.

"As farms work to match production with the growing global population it becomes increasingly important that they have the tools needed to continue to increase production. New varieties are an important segment of this growth. Ensuring that our plant breeders' rights regulations are aligned with our global trading partners is imperative," said Keith Kuhl, President of the Canadian Horticultural Council.

"Canadian farmers need access to new seed varieties in order to remain competitive and to feed a hungry world," says Gary Stanford, Grain Growers of Canada President. "Close to 90 percent of innovation investment is currently in just three crops which have some intellectual property protection. This legislation is needed to protect plant breeders' work on seed traits and it will encourage more research in cereals and in plant breeding in general."



"The Canadian Potato Council is pleased to see the amendments to the Plant Breeders' Rights Act. We will now be conforming to international standards of plant variety protection that have been adopted by virtually all developed countries," said Joe Brennan, Chair of the Canadian Potato Council. "The proposed amendments will encourage the development and availability of superior potato varieties that will further enhance the competitiveness of the Canadian potato industry."

Canada is one of only two developed country UPOV members whose legislation does not comply with UPOV 1991. This puts Canadian breeders and farmers at a competitive disadvantage. Peter Entz, President of the Canadian Seed Trade Association said: "Adopting UPOV 1991 will mean that Canadian breeders will have intellectual property protection tools that are comparable to those used by breeders around the world, opening new markets for Canadian innovations and giving Canadian farmers access to genetics and varieties developed internationally."

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Partners in Innovation participants include:

Barley Council of Canada
Alberta Barley Commission
Canadian Horticultural Council
Canadian Ornamental Horticulture Alliance
Canadian Potato Council
Canadian Seed Trade Association
Fédération des Producteurs de Cultures Commerciales du Québec
Grain Farmers of Ontario
Grain Growers of Canada
Manitoba Pulse Growers Association
The Prairie Oat Growers Association
Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association

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