

# **FORAGE SEED CANADA**

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Alfalfa Seed Commission - Alberta  
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Forage Seed Canada (FSC) is a national voice representing all grass seed and legume seed producers in Canada, currently with membership from the five provincial seed associations, including Alfalfa Seed Commission-Alberta, Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission, Sask Leafcutter Association, Manitoba Forage Seed Association, and Peace Region Forage Seed Association. FSC represents all Canada's forage seed producer's concerns regarding all national forage seed issues. One of our strengths has been and currently still is the ability to attract and retain a diverse, strongly relevant and representative group of talented individuals who are very motivated to guide the association on a course that is consistent in dealing with the concerns of the forage seed industry. Add to that the cumulative great wealth in experience and knowledge base of all the contributing individuals and their respective areas that they represent (grower/producer, seed cleaning, pollinator, equipment suppliers, etc).

We've been strong advocates of maintaining our "forage seed producer" focus, and have deliberately denied opening or changing our membership to any associate members or trade members, as well as remaining staunchly opposed to any merging suggestions from national forage groups.

One of the initial projects undertaken by Forage Seed Canada in the past was to put forage seed growers on the radar of our federal government in light of the missing out of GOPP (Grains & Oilseeds Payment Program) payments. Since then, FSC has had meetings with Gerry Ritz (Minister of Ag), and Wayne Easter (then Liberal Ag Critic). We've checked into the Carbon Credits program currently available in Alberta, and followed the so-called expansion of this program into other provinces. We've had correspondence with our government regarding excess moisture programs and their impact on forage seed producers.

This past November, representing FSC, I traveled to Montreal for the Canadian Forage & Grasslands Conference to gain exposure and insight into recent events concerning GE alfalfa, and to listen to other organizations from across Canada with concerns similar to ours. Members of our board are currently planning another meeting this spring with Gerry Ritz (Minister of Ag) and Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health-CFIA) regarding this important issue.

Although the major issue that is being addressed at this time is the development of a Position Statement for FSC regarding the GE alfalfa issue, and our next step is to send it out to newspapers and other organizations to obtain feedback and possibly support, it is by no means

our only focus. There are ongoing items we have been following on different fronts, such as the Canadian Cocoon Testing Centre in Brooks, the possible rerouting of the Canadian Alfalfa Seed Council (CASC) over to FSC, and the Canadian Forage Seed Project's lack of available seed stocks of public forage seed varieties. A request regarding investigating the possible redevelopment and breeding of winter rhizobia for legumes in northern climates was introduced recently.

Going forward, we are in the planning stages of developing a website for Forage Seed Canada to have a central source of information and communication. We also recognize the importance of interacting regularly with all our member boards and supplying information on a continual basis, and will make this a priority.

Our small operating budget pushes us to be specific and creative with all our strategizing, and consequently we must prioritize to get the most value or "bang for our buck" so to speak. Our method of conversing through email, piggybacking other meetings and by conference call has proven to be cost-effective and sufficient thus far. Our AGM recently held just prior to the Western Alfalfa Seed Conference in Las Vegas is an example of our prudence – after comparing costs and options in all three prairie provinces, and since all but two members of our ten member board were already attending the conference at their own expense, the cost of our own meeting was substantially less than hosting it anywhere else, as our financial reports will show.

FSC would like to emphasize that any concerns brought forward regarding national forage seed issues will be considered and dealt with, so we welcome input from our grass and legume seed growers who we represent. It is extremely important to maintain our national voice for all forage seed producers, as there will no doubt be new issues going forward that we can address on all our behalf. We recognize that more communication is going to be required and we'll be corresponding with updates but also requesting input from our member boards.

On behalf of the entire board of FSC, I would like to thank ASC-A for their past support and look forward to your ongoing commitment in building and maintaining a strong Canadian national voice for all forage seed growers.

Respectfully yours,

Heather Kerschbaumer  
President  
Forage Seed Canada