

# Seed Testing You Can Rely on: How Accreditation Ensures Accuracy and Consistency

Meeting international standards means SGS Canada's clients can make better decisions, faster.



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If you are not familiar with the topic, any laboratory performing seed quality testing in Canada must have the proper accreditation to operate and satisfy the Canadian seeds regulations. One of the key requirements for these accreditations is having at least one analyst that is accredited by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for each test conducted, ensuring that the work is held to the highest standards. At both of our labs we do not sell anything other than quality, and for us, having a mature, robust quality system is non-negotiable for the accreditations that we hold.

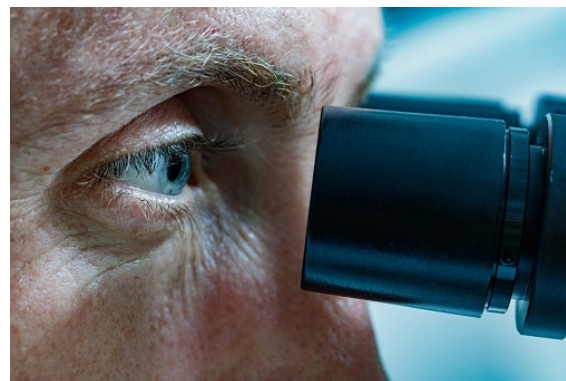
Our seed laboratories at SGS Canada Crop Science in Alberta are fully accredited to operate in Canada under the regulations of the CFIA and regularly audited by Seeds Canada. Our largest facility, located in Sherwood Park, Alta., offers a wide range of services, including seed certification testing like germination, purity and true loose smut under the CFIA. Our Sherwood Park lab also offers International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) Blue and Orange Certificates for a wide range of tests. And to round off the tests needed for export, the lab is accredited under the Recognition of Export Grain Analysis by Authorized Laboratories (REGAL) program.

Our CFIA-accredited lab in Grande Prairie, Alta., specializes in forages, and native seed species, adhering to Association of Official Seed Analyst (AOSA) and ISTA seed testing standards.

Beyond meeting these requirements, we are committed to reducing our environmental footprint, which is also an integral part of our operations. Sustainability matters — not just to us, but to our clients. In order to do so we have achieved LEAF (Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework) in 2023 in our Sherwood Park lab.

While our labs are on slightly different audit schedules, each of our labs faces audits every three years for the applicable accreditation to remain compliant. When an audit is scheduled, the accreditation body requests parts of our quality manual in advance to confirm our system is in line with the applicable standard. During the audit itself, the auditors follow a checklist to ensure every aspect of the accreditation standard is met.

Our philosophy is that an audit should feel like any



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other day in the lab. If you are scrambling to prepare for an audit, it suggests that your quality system is not functioning year-round. Audits offer a glimpse into our quality system, which is about maintaining a high quality of testing and results delivery every single day.

The value we gain from audits is the feedback from the findings. For example, one of these findings helped us improve the trending of our monitoring data for analysts. Now we can detect issues or discrepancies earlier, which ensures consistency across the team, and ultimately improves the reliability of our results.

Clients may not always notice or understand the importance of our accreditations, but they certainly benefit from them. It is similar to getting bloodwork done — you may not think about the lab's accreditation, but you trust that the results are accurate and reliable. That is the peace of mind we provide. Accreditations ensure our processes meet rigorous international standards, which translates into accurate testing, faster turnaround times, and better decision-making for our clients.

At the end of the day, we are not just here to pass audits. We are here to maintain trust, deliver reliable and accurate results, and constantly improve. That is what sets SGS Canada apart, and it is why we are so committed to the process.