

MINUTES
CSGA 119th Annual General Meeting
July 9-10, 2023, St. John's, Newfoundland

Welcome

More than 140 participants were welcomed to the 119th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association (CSGA) by President Dale Connell and Executive Director Doug Miller. Accomplishments of 2022 were summarized, a quorum was confirmed, the AGM agenda was reviewed, and meeting sponsors were thanked.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Joe Hickson moved, and Roy Klym seconded approval of the following Agenda for the 2023 CSGA Annual General Meeting (AGM.) **CARRIED**

1. Welcome
2. Approval of AGM Agenda
3. Sponsors' Recognition
4. Approval of Minutes from 2022 AGM
5. President's Report
6. AAFC Minister Bibeau's Welcome
7. Executive Director's Report
8. Financial Report and Approval of Auditor
9. Responses to 2022 Resolutions
10. Nominations Report and Election of 2023-2024 Board of Directors
11. Member Proposals - Town Hall session
12. Seed Regulatory Modernization Update – CFIA: Wendy Jahn
13. Launch of "This is Canadian Certified Seed" Campaign
14. Seed Certification Around the Globe – OECD: Csaba Gaspar, AOSCA: Dr. Sarah Wilbanks
15. Member-to-Member Session
16. Navigating the Future in Agri-Food: Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Dalhousie University
17. Seed Innovation - Unlocking the Potential of Machine Learning for Innovative Plant Breeding: Mohsen Yoosefzadah Najfabadi and Computer Vision for Seed Quality Testing: Holly Gelech
18. Next Generation Seed Growers: Jake Ayre, Amanda Ellis, Craig Rickard
19. Awards Luncheon

Sponsors' Recognition

President Dale Connell thanked the following sponsors for their essential support of the 2023 CSGA Annual General Meeting (AGM):

- SeCan – for the Rally in the Alley on Sunday night
- Corteva Canada – for the Gala Awards Luncheon on Monday
- Crop Development Centre, University of Saskatchewan - for registrants' lanyards
- Canterra Seeds - for hotel room digital keys
- AgCall Crop Inspect - for lunch on Sunday
- SGS Canada - for breakfast on Sunday
- Syngenta, 20/20 Seed Labs, and Farm Credit Canada - for coffee breaks
- Germination/SeedWorld - the AGM media sponsor with a booth in the foyer
- Prograin and Alliance Seed - for their general AGM support

Approval of Minutes from 2022 AGM

Motion: Daniel Limoges moved, and Andrew Dawson seconded approval of the Minutes from the 2022 Annual General Meeting. **CARRIED**

President's Report

After recognizing past and honorary presidents, awards recipients, staff, and Board directors, President Dale Connell asked for a moment of silence to remember the seed growers who passed in 2022. Dale then reviewed the milestones achieved in 2022, the substantial progress toward CSGA 2.0 goals and our impact on the Seed Regulatory Modernization efforts. As outlined in the Executive Director's Report, CSGA is committed to the highest standards of transparency, integrity, and accountability and supporting the production of the highest quality seed. Seed growers' hard work and expertise mean that farmers across the country have access to the best possible seed.

AAFC Minister Bibeau's Welcome

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau thanked CSGA for its long history of partnering with the Government to ensure that Canada's food sector is sustainable, that our agricultural supply chain is secure, and that farmers have maximum confidence in the seed they plant. She reminded the meeting that seed crop certification fosters trust, traceability and transparency and explained that the AgriAssurance fund of AAFC is supporting digital transition at CSGA as well as a Certified seed awareness campaign.

Minister Bibeau also thanked CSGA for its active participation in the Seed Regulatory Modernization (SRM), which involves an innovative co-development process that allows for input from all value chain members. SRM aims to reduce the burden of regulations by making them more efficient and adaptable.

Executive Director's Report

CSGA's Executive Director, Doug Miller, reviewed CSGA's performance metrics, progress on delivering CSGA 2.0 Business Plan priorities, and CSGA's future vision for seed certification. Performance in 2022 included certification of more than 1.24 million acres of seed crops of more than 2,000 varieties of more than 70 different crop kinds for more than 3,000 growers across Canada. Other 2022 deliverables included more than 160 registrants in *CSGA Learn*, our new online seed training platform, and the launch of a digital seed tag pilot. To maintain its leadership role and influence outcomes, CSGA also invested substantial resources and outreach in Seed Regulatory Modernization activities. The [2022-2023 CSGA Annual Report](#) provides a full picture of activities in 2022.

Financial Report

Doug presented the financial report, highlighting the Association's financial performance for 2021 and reminded the AGM that Audited Financial Statements are available online, as is [CSGA's 2021-2022 Annual Report](#). Discussion of the financial statements clarified that government subsidies were one-time grants for pandemic expenses.

Approval of Auditors

As advised by the CSGA Audit Committee, the Board recommended that KPMG be appointed as the Association's auditors for 2023-2024.

Motion: Roy Klym moved, and Tom Greaves seconded the appointment of KPMG as auditors for the Association for the ensuing year at the remuneration set by the Board of Directors. **CARRIED**

Responses to 2022 Resolutions

Governance Committee chair Glenn Logan outlined the CSGA responses to each of the Resolutions approved by members at the 2022 AGM and then supervised the election of the 2023-2024 CSGA Board of Directors.

Motion: Sarah Weigum moved, and Carl Bolton seconded approval of the 2022 Resolutions Report as presented to the membership. **CARRIED**

Nominations Report and Election of 2023-2024 Board of Directors

CSGA By-laws specify that the Association is governed by a Board of Directors, and [By-law 6.03 \(a\)](#) provides that every seed-producing region of Canada is represented on the Board by a grower director. The Board is also supported by an Academic Advisor and Advisors nominated by their respective Provincial Ministers.

The following seed growers have been nominated by members of their respective Branches for election as Directors to the CSGA Board.

- Alberta-British Columbia: Glenn Logan and Chelsea Tomlinson
- Saskatchewan: Roy Klym and Laurie Wakefield
- Manitoba: Andrew Ayre and Ryan Murray
- Ontario: Shannon Bieman and Carl Bolton
- Quebec: Marc-Antoine Paquet and Richard Brault
- Maritimes: Jonathan Nyborg

Motion: Barry Reisner moved, and Daniel Sanders seconded, to elect the Directors nominated to the CSGA Board of Directors as presented to members. **CARRIED**

The following have been named for appointment to the CSGA Board by their respective Provincial Ministers as Advisors to the Board.

- British Columbia: Brenna Schilds
- Alberta: Krista deMilliano
- Manitoba: Chami Amarasinghe
- Saskatchewan: Sara Tetland
- Ontario: Joanna Follings
- Quebec: Damien Chaput
- New Brunswick: Peter Scott
- Nova Scotia: Amy Sangster
- Prince Edward Island: Steven Hamill

The following are appointed to the CSGA Board for 2023-2024. Dr. Bryan Harvey will continue as an Academic Advisor, and Dale Connell has been appointed by the Board as CSGA President.

The following will represent the CSGA Executive Committee for 2023-2024.

- President: Dale Connell
- Vice President: Glenn Logan
- Second Vice President: Shannon Bieman
- Provincial Ministry Representative: Peter Scott
- Past President: Joe Rennick

The AGM was asked by Governance Committee chair Glenn Logan to join him in showing our appreciation for this Board of Directors who volunteer their time to support CSGA.

Member Proposals

CSGA Vice-President Glenn Logan explained that Member Proposals, previously described as Member Resolutions, are an important part of the Association's governance. They allow members' voices to be heard and can provide direction to the Board of Directors on policy development or support for specific grassroots issues. The CSGA office did not receive any member proposals for discussion at the AGM.

Adjourn Annual Meeting Business Session

Motion: Daniel Limoges moved, and Bradley Limoges seconded, to adjourn the business session of the 2023 CSGA Annual General Meeting. **CARRIED**

Town Hall Session

With the business session adjourned, a Town Hall Session of the AGM was launched.

Seed Regulatory Modernization (SRM) Update – CSGA: Doug Miller; CFIA: Wendy Jahn

Executive Director Doug Miller summarized the CSGA 2.0 Business Plan vision for a strong, national seed certification system that encourages innovation. He outlined key SRM proposals: CSGA as the main administrator of Canada's seed certification system, plans for a digital single window, the role of government in variety eligibility, and governance and partnerships.

CSGA continues highlighting the existing involvement of the seed sector value chain in our standard-setting framework and the proposed role of a Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Committee, and the inclusion of more external representatives on key CSGA committees.

Wendy Jahn, National Manager of CFIA's Seed Section, summarized feedback received in their SRM survey last winter from 315 respondents that included 24 responses from member organizations and announced that a 'What We Heard Report' will soon be released. She outlined the government's general concerns when considering regulatory amendments and also their plans for another SRM consultation next winter that includes larger overarching proposals.

A members' discussion session on SRM involved the proposed Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Committee, when SRM would be completed, and the practical impacts of CSGA's digital single window plans.

Launch 'Choose Certified Seed' Campaign

CSGA's new Certified seed promotion [microsite](#) and mini videos, with the hashtag #ChooseCertifiedSeed #ChoisirSemenceCertifiée, were presented to the AGM by Caroline Lafontaine, CSGA's Chief Operating Officer (COO), who emphasized the importance of promoting this with others in the seed and agri-food sectors. Noting the absence of CSGA branding, she highlighted the goal of creating shareable content for fall-winter distribution to producers by the seed sector.

Seed Certification Around the Globe – OECD: Csaba Gaspar, AOSCA: Dr. Sarah Wilbanks

In a panel discussion moderated by Executive Director Doug Miller, Dr. Sarah Wilbanks, CEO of the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA), and Csaba Gaspar, Programme Manager of the OECD Seed Schemes, outlined recent developments and challenges. They also answered impact prediction questions on genetic testing, drones, and digitization and reminded the AGM that while agriculture feeds nations, seed feeds agriculture.

Their replies to members' questions included the importance of transparency and international mutual recognition in standards development and a growing awareness in government and business of the value of traceability in maintaining secure supply chains.

Member-to-Member Session

At 14:30h NDT, the meeting convened a member-to-member session.

Navigating the Future in Agri-Food: Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Dalhousie University

In an engaging presentation, Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University, outlined the impacts of inflation, geopolitics and post-Covid supply chain renewal that are changing the agri-food distribution sector. With communications today dominated by social media that is riddled with misinformation, he reminded the AGM of the critical value of ongoing consumer education because most consumers misunderstand how the food system works.

Seed Innovation

- Unlocking the Potential of Machine Learning for Innovative Plant Breeding: Mohsen Yoosefzadah Najafabadi, University of Guelph
- Computer Vision for Seed Quality Testing: Holly Gelech, SGS Canada

Mohsen Yoosefzadah Najafabadi, from the University of Guelph, explained how machine learning, a branch of Artificial Intelligence (AI), can be partnered with advances in other sciences, such as genomics and phenomics, to vastly increase the capacity of plant breeders to screen molecular markers and expedite development of new seed varieties.

Holly Gelech of SGS Canada in Sherwood Park, Alberta, described how advances in multispectral imaging are expediting the testing of seed for physical impurities. The use of videometers with >99% accuracy to conduct macro-level screening, approved by ISTA in 2022, allows analysts to now focus on the exceptional shapes of impurities not yet in the videometer's database.

Their replies to members' questions included the importance of a gradual stepwise approach to implementing new technologies to evaluate their appropriate, value-added applications and the critical value of maintaining ongoing communications between the seed sector and plant breeders and seed analysts.

Next-Generation Seed Growers: Jake Ayre, Amanda Ellis, and Craig Rickard

In a panel discussion moderated by Executive Director Doug Miller, three next generation seed growers, Jake Ayre, Amanda Ellis and Craig Rickard, were asked what attracts the next generation to a career in the certified seed sector and how CSGA and its Branches could best support next generation growers. Most were attracted to the on-farm autonomy and the ever-changing managing challenges of new, innovative technologies. CSGA should continue digitizing its systems, collaborating broadly, and clarifying how certified seed is produced and by whom, with a focus on transparency and traceability messages for increasingly skeptical consumers.

Adjourn Town Hall Session

At 11:45h NDT, the Town Hall session of CSGA's 2023 Annual General Meeting was adjourned.

CSGA Annual Awards Luncheon

Each year CSGA recognizes leaders for their contribution not only to our Association but to the betterment of their communities and the agri-food sector. At this 2023 Awards Luncheon, CSGA President Dale Connell recalled that over the last three years, CSGA had to present awards to recipients in virtual meetings, which didn't have the same celebratory effect. Fortunately, some of those award recipients were in attendance and were recognized. They included Jennifer Seward, Chris Ens, Rick Rutherford, Joe Hickson and Peter Szentimrey.

The Robertson Associate Award recognizes the utmost fidelity to CSGA and contribution to the betterment of the seed sector and Canadian agriculture. In 2023, recipients of this award included:

- [Martin Provencher](#) (Québec): a Branch director for 21 years and CSGA director for 10 years
- [Dave MacKellar](#) (Ontario): a Branch director for 20 years and CSGA director for 5 years.

The Honorary Life Award recognizes those who, by distinguished service to the Association, have contributed to the betterment of the seed sector and Canadian agriculture. In 2023, the recipients are:

- [Heather McBey](#) (Manitoba): a longtime advocate for the forage seed industry who has built ties with forage seed organizations across western Canada.
- [Glyn Chancey](#) (Ontario): CSGA Executive Director from 2015 to 2021, who provides important contributions, at a critical juncture, to the Association's strategic direction.

For her many years of dedicated service on the CSGA Board of Directors, Roxanne Asselin was thanked by CSGA President Dale Connell for sharing her passion and expertise and was presented with a Retiring Director Award.

Jennifer Seward was thanked for her 20 years of committed, enthusiastic service as Executive Director of the Manitoba Seed Growers' Association (MSGA) by Tom Greaves, MSGA President.

With thanks to all for coming out to St. John's, Newfoundland, and for their dedication to producing the best seed for Canadian producers, CSGA President Dale Connell wished everyone safe travels back home and the best of luck with their crops.