



Guidelines on Seed Health Testing in the Vegetable Seed Industry

(Adopted by the ISF Vegetable and Ornamental Crops Section in Calgary, June 2010)

Seed health testing is an integral tool for all seed companies in disease risk management. The vegetable seed industry considers a collaborative development of seed health test methods to be of mutual benefit for the whole seed-supply chain and, therefore, a non-competitive subject. The International Seed Health Initiative for Vegetable Crops (ISHI-Veg) was conceived by the vegetable seed industry as a means to develop and disseminate reference methods for seed health testing in order to minimize differences in methods used by countries and seed companies.

A measure of ISHI-Veg's success lies in the acceptance it has received internationally of its seed health test methods. These methods are regularly reviewed, updated and posted on the ISF website.

The ISF Vegetable and Ornamental Crop Section strongly recommends the use of ISHI-Veg methods by the vegetable seed industry preferably as the standard method or, at least, as a reference for comparison to the company's standard method. If a company claims to have used an ISHI-Veg method, it must ensure the method has been used in its entirety and without any modification. It is also recommended that company seed health testing laboratories seek accreditation by an internationally recognised body for their laboratory management practices.

If a disease complaint implicates a particular seed lot and it is to be evaluated, the ISHI-Veg method should be used in one of two ways:

- As the reference method along with the standard method used by the company, or
- As the standard method itself.

As ISHI-Veg methods are regularly reviewed and updated, the version used in the evaluation will be the one that was on the ISF website at the time the disputed seed lot was tested.