



INTERNATIONAL SEED TESTING ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE D'ESSAIS DE SEMENCES
INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG FÜR SAATGUTPRÜFUNG

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**9th ISTA Proficiency Test on GMO
Testing on Maize
(*Zea mays* L.)
Announcement**



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9th ISTA Proficiency Test on GMO Testing on Maize

(*Zea mays* L.)

Announcement

Dear Colleague,

We would like to address this announcement for participation in the ninth round to all laboratories carrying out GMO tests.

1. AIM

The aim of the proficiency test is to check the ability of individual laboratories to detect the presence or absence of GM seeds, to quantify and identify their presence in samples of conventional seeds of *Zea mays*.

Since GMO testing has been included in the ISTA Accreditation Programme, the participation in the ISTA Proficiency Tests on GMO Testing is compulsory for those laboratories currently in the process of accreditation in GM seed testing.

This round does also comprise two separate samples of GM seeds for those laboratories who wish to analyse them. The two samples of 50 seeds each contain GM seeds in which the presence of non-GM seeds shall be quantified. Participation is voluntary and needs to be indicated on the registration form. This part of the Proficiency test is subject to availability of seed material.

2. SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Each participating laboratory will receive 12 maize seed samples bearing an identification number. Laboratories shall receive samples with approximately 2000 seeds (635g) based on the 1000 seed weight. Some of the samples will be positive (i.e. contain GM seeds) and others will be negative (i.e. contain no GM seeds).

Two additional samples of 50 seeds each are dispatched upon request. They contain GM seeds for which the genetic purity shall be analysed.

3. QUALITATIVE TEST

A qualitative result, i.e. the detection of GM seeds, is required. This can be either derived from the quantitative test result or from a separate test on the sample.



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4. QUANTIFICATION OF GM SEEDS IN POSITIVE SAMPLES

The laboratories must quantify the content of GM seeds in the positive samples **either by** a sub-sampling quantification (semi-quantitative test) **or** by a quantitative test.

The choice of the method used for testing is at the laboratory's discretion.

It is required to report an estimate percentage of GM seeds per test sample.

In case of Sub-sampling quantification (Semi-quantitative test)	In case of Quantitative test
<p>The laboratory shall report the number of sub-samples tested, the size of the sub-samples (in number of seeds) and the number of positive sub-samples.</p> <p>These elements can be used to compute and estimate the percentage of GM seeds in the sample.</p> <p>The laboratory shall provide the result in percent seed by number.</p> <p>Seedcalc7 available on the ISTA Website can perform this computation: http://www.seedtest.org/en/content---1--1143.html</p>	<p>The laboratory shall report the GM content in the test sample.</p> <p>Results must be reported in percent either related to the number of seeds, to the seed sample weight or DNA copy number.</p>

5. PARTICIPATION FEE

For the 9th ISTA Proficiency Test on GMO Testing non-members of ISTA pay a participation fee of 270 CHF (approx. 220 US\$). The fee covers costs for seed material, sample preparation, GMO purity check and phytosanitary tests, packaging and shipment (priority).

ISTA Members do not have to pay a participation fee. They must identify themselves on the registration form by referring to their ISTA member code.

6. REGISTRATION

Please send your registration form by email, mail or fax to the ISTA Secretariat stating the laboratory's name, the person in charge, the mail address (for sample delivery), the phone and the fax number.



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7. MATERIAL TRANSFER AGREEMENT (MTA)

Participating laboratories must send in the signed Material Transfer Agreement (MTA). Samples will only be dispatched after the MTA has been received.

The MTA will be sent to you upon registration for the proficiency test. You are kindly asked to check if the name and address of the person in charge is correct on the MTA provided and inform the ISTA Secretariat if changes are necessary.

Please submit the signed MTA by mail (two copies) or by fax to the ISTA Secretariat. We will return one signed copy to the participant.

8. SHIPPING

The dispatch of the samples to the laboratories will start as of August 15, 2007.

The package contains 12 samples, each of about 2000 seeds of *Zea mays*, in total about 7.6kg. The seeds have not been treated. The samples are packed in hermetically sealed plastic bags and the consignment will be labelled 'seeds for scientific propose only'. If necessary, a phytosanitary certificate will be enclosed. If there are special requirements for shipping samples into your country, please let us know.

9. REPORTING RESULTS

The results are expected to be reported to the ISTA Secretariat latest by **October 30, 2007**.

The laboratory sends the results together with the information requested on the provided forms (result protocols) either by mail, fax or email.

The laboratory may submit more than one set of result protocols for different test methods but the laboratory must clearly indicate which set of result protocols should be evaluated. Only one set of result protocols per laboratory is accepted for the evaluation.

Laboratories not having sent the results to the ISTA Secretariat two weeks before the deadline will receive a reminder. Laboratories encountering difficulties to report on time have to inform the ISTA Secretariat before the deadline stating reasons for the delay and an indication when results will be reported. It will be decided on a case by case basis whether delayed results can be included or not.

Participants who have sent in their results, will receive a preliminary and a final result report containing the following:

- the positive and negative samples,
- the spiking level of each sample,
- the laboratory's qualitative test results,
- the laboratory's quantitative test results.

A summary of the results reported by all laboratories participating in this test round will be prepared and sent to the laboratories, published in the ISTA News Bulletin 'Seed Testing International' and on the ISTA Website.



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10. TIME SCHEDULE

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| 1. Registration of laboratories interested in participation | starting June 15, 2007 |
| 2. MTA for signing and directions of payment sent to participant | upon receipt of registration |
| 3. Submission of the signed MTA and payment of participation fee | before July 30, 2007 |
| 4. Sample shipment | starting August 15, 2007 |
| 5. Submission of test results to the ISTA Secretariat | before October 30, 2007 |
| 6. Reporting of preliminary performance results by the Secretariat | November 15, 2007 |

Yours sincerely,

Gerhard Schuon
ISTA Secretariat

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