



ISTA Press Release

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ISTA initiates Proficiency Tests on GMO Testing in Conventional Seed

The adventitious presence of GM seeds in non GM seed lots has increasingly become a problem for the international trade. Besides the politically difficult discussions regarding the threshold for GM seeds in conventional seed lots, the establishment of relevant, reliable and economical methodology for detection, identification and quantification of GM content in conventional seed lots continues to be a challenge.

In view of the situation, ISTA laid down its position, and established a new strategy: At the heart of this strategy was that the ISTA GMO Task Force would organise proficiency tests on GMO testing in conventional seed. The 2nd GMO Proficiency Test was initiated in February 2003. The Aim of this Proficiency Test on GMO Testing was to check the ability of individual laboratories to detect and, on a voluntary basis, to quantify the presence of GM seeds in samples of conventional seed of *Zea mays* L. The object of data analysis was not to identify deviating laboratories but to compile the performances in the laboratories and to provide data for the laboratories' internal performance data base.

Each participating laboratory received a set of 10 maize samples. 3 samples were negative (no GM seeds added) and 7 samples were positive. Of the 7, 3 were spiked with 0.7% GM seeds (MON810) and 4 were spiked with 1.4% GM seeds. Laboratories could use the method they thought appropriate for this test.

52 received the samples and 47 submitted their results before the acceptance of results for the evaluation was closed on 27 June 2003. All 47 laboratories reported qualitative results that could be evaluated. 13 laboratories reported semi-quantitative test results that could be evaluated. 19 laboratories reported quantitative test results, with evaluable data, and performed in total 20 test series since one laboratory applied two different methods.

If you are interested in more information, or would like to participated in the ISTA Proficiency Test on GMO Testing, please contact the ISTA Secretariat directly at ista.office@ista.ch, or visit the website at www.seedtest.org

Table 1: Number and percentage of all, negative and positive samples reported as false.

	# of samples tested	# of samples reported as false	# of samples reported as false
All samples	470	17	3.6%
Negative samples	141	7	5.0%
Positive samples	all	10	3.0%
	0.7% GM content	8	5.7%
	1.4% GM content	2	1.1%

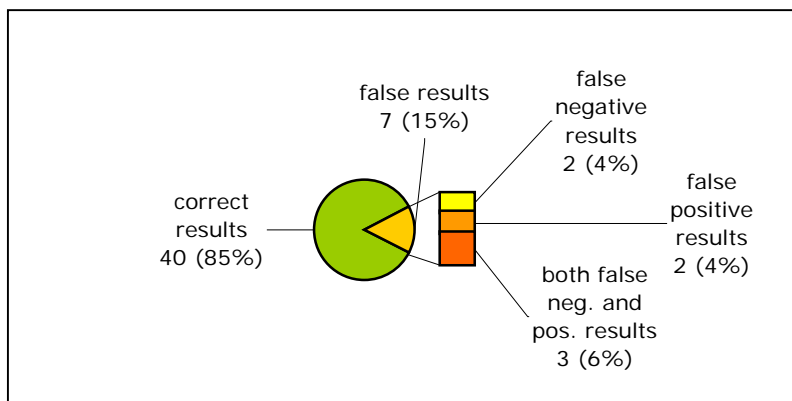


Figure 1: Percentage of laboratories reporting correct and false results.