



# ISTA Press Release

ISTA Press Release 05/August 19, 2005

## ISTA Accreditation of Laboratories on the Detection of Specified Traits in Seed Lots

At the last Ordinary Meeting of the Association, voting delegates representing 34 national governments supported the inclusion of Rules for the testing of specified traits (including the detection, identification and quantification of Genetically Modified Seed) into Chapter 8 of the *ISTA International Rules for Seed Testing*.

In difference to other seed tests, no standard method will be described in the *ISTA International Rules for Seed Testing*, but the testing for specified traits (including the detection, identification and quantification of Genetically Modified Seed) will be done under a performance based approach.

Under the performance based approach, the laboratory can freely choose a method, however has to fulfil three conditions before accreditation:

1. provide performance data on the successful implementation of the method in the laboratory as prescribed in the relevant ISTA documents, with a special focus on the parameters accuracy and repeatability
2. successfully participate in the ISTA Proficiency Test
3. successfully participate in the ISTA Audit Programme

Not to include a standard method into the *ISTA International Rules for Seed Testing* is new for ISTA. Quite a number of intensive discussions, also with ISTA's international and regional partners, the International Seed Federation (ISF), International Society of Seed Technologists (ISST) and the Association of Official Seed Analysts (AOSA), have taken place regarding the right approach to move forward.

At the end, the conclusion was that methods to perform bio-molecular tests and bioassays require highly sophisticated equipment, skilled operators and specialized laboratory equipment and more than this, these methods are currently under a rapid development and improvement and may require specific laboratory optimising and updating.

Therefore, ISTA is convinced that over a time range of three to five years, a performance based approach is more favourable to achieve reliable and reproducible test results in the area of the testing of specified traits than working on the establishment of a standard methods.

With the positive vote of the Governments in ISTA to include the performance based approach in the ISTA Rules, ISTA will start with the accreditation of laboratories on the detection of specified traits in seed lots on February 2006.

The aim will be to provide reliable and reproducible testing results on international level through the ISTA accredited laboratories.

We feel that this is a tremendous step forward and will create the necessary confidence in the testing results for the Governments to fulfil their monitoring tasks and for the seed trade to market their seed on international level without greater financial risks.

The relevant ISTA accreditation documents can be downloaded free of charge from the ISTA Website <http://www.seedtest.org/en/content---1--1184.html> :

1. Principles and Conditions for Laboratory Accreditation under the Performance Based approach.
2. Performance Data Evaluation for the presence of seed with specified trait(s) in seed lots
3. The ISTA Accreditation Standard