



ISTA

Seed Quality Assurance



Bassersdorf, Switzerland
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Press Release

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HIGH QUALITY – UFA Revue

Andreas Wais, ISTA Secretary General was interviewed by Verena Säle from UFA-Revue. He explained what the association is and why we need the International Rules.

He said that ISTA main task is Seed quality assurance. The association was founded in 1924 after the second international seed congress. Previously the different countries had already their own laws and regulations for Seed Testing but they were only nationally binding. ISTA was created to have a central location that publishes internationally valid guideline for seed testing. These seed testing guidelines are needed, because only consequently can it be ensured that the Farmer gets a seed that meets its quality standards.

For example, he mentioned Zambia is a great seed corn producer and they export them to different countries. For the seeds to cross borders, it is required a kind of accreditation, like a passport. The certificates issued by the accredited ISTA Laboratories around the world offers this endorsement and that's why only these accredited laboratories can issue the certificates.

He mentioned that ISTA have a total of 225 member laboratories around the globe which are represented in 83 states. The association counts with 97 laboratories members in Europe and 66 laboratories members in Asia, the remaining 62 laboratories are from the rest of the world. Africa is very strongly represented, as Egypt is one of the founding members. In Switzerland, Agroscope is accredited to perform seed testing and issue certifications under the ISTA Guidelines.

He added that ISTA certified Seed differentiate by the seed purity and germination traceability. This means that the seeds are free of pathogens and weed seeds, which is important for the imported seeds.

The ISTA rules are every year changed. The suggestions to the adjustments are made by the technical committee. They research different topics such as purity, humidity, GMO, seed health and others. Different Laboratories review the proposed changes and they validate the methods

CONTACT

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ABOUT ISTA

Founded in 1924, with the aim to develop and publish internationally agreed rules for seed sampling and testing, accredits laboratories, promotes research, provides international seed analysis certificates and training, and also disseminates knowledge in seed science and technology. ISTA members are over 85 countries/distinct economies worldwide and they work together to achieve their vision of 'Uniformity in seed quality evaluation worldwide'. This facilitates seed trading nationally and internationally, and also contributes to food security.





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after comparing the research results. All laboratories must ensure the same results. These results are summarized in one report that afterwards will be disclosed. The Executive Committee, the board of the association, reviews the report and submits the changes to the ordinary general assembly for voting. ISTA is country organized and not every lab or personal member is allowed to vote, only one member per country defined by each government. This means that the governments vote on the rule changes and approve them. That's important for the transport and trade of seeds. At the end of the year the new rules are published and they are announced to the member laboratories. The Rules are valid from 1 January every year.

He finally explained that in the recent years the main changes have been done in the seed health field. But also different researches in genetically modified seed have been made.

Original interview in German: https://www.ufarevue.ch/files/D_UR1118_Composit.pdf

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