

Canadian Seed Growers' Association Statement on AAFC Research Facility Closures

OTTAWA, ON, CANADA, February 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Canadian Seed Growers' Association is deeply concerned by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's decision to [close seven federal research facilities](#) across the country, a move that will have far-reaching consequences for Canada's seed system, crop innovation, and agricultural competitiveness.



While the federal government has suggested these closures will deliver modest annual savings of \$4 to 5 million, the downstream economic impacts risk undermining hundreds of millions of dollars in agricultural value, particularly in crops that depend on strong public-sector variety development.

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Doug Miller, Executive Director, CSGA

“Virtually all crop production in Canada begins with seed,” said Doug Miller, CSGA Executive Director. “Weakening public research capacity creates ripple effects throughout the system, from plant breeding and variety registration to certified seed production, farm productivity, and export competitiveness. These cuts may yield short-term fiscal

savings, but they carry long-term consequences that far outweigh any immediate gain.”

Canada's agriculture sector operates across one of the most diverse and challenging production environments in the world. Public plant breeding and applied research have long played a critical role in delivering well-adapted, high-quality varieties that enable Canadian farmers to remain competitive in the face of climate variability, evolving disease pressures, and global market demands.

In 2024 alone, Canada's principal field crops generated \$35.7 billion in farm cash receipts, with \$26.8 billion in exports. Much of this success is built on publicly developed varieties, particularly in crops such as wheat, barley, oats, pulses, and specialty crops where private investment alone has not proven sufficient to meet long-term national needs.

The Association is especially concerned that these closures further erode Canada's capacity for final-stage variety development, not just early-stage or pre-breeding research.

Experience shows that removing the public sector from field-ready breeding weakens innovation outcomes, disconnects research from on-farm realities, and ultimately limits farmers' access to improved varieties.

"Plant breeding is not a switch that can be turned on and off," said Miller. "Developing a new variety takes roughly 10 years. Once expertise, facilities, and regionally adapted programs are lost, they are extremely difficult to rebuild."

Seed growers rely on a stable and predictable pipeline of new varieties developed through close collaboration among breeders, pathologists, agronomists, quality specialists, and the broader value chain. Public research programs are also essential for training the next generation of plant scientists and for advancing technologies that are later adopted by the private sector.

We support a balanced, made-in-Canada approach to variety development that recognizes the complementary roles of public and private investment. While private-sector breeding is well suited to certain crops where cost recovery is viable, public breeding remains essential for many of Canada's most important field and specialty crops.

Last Friday, CSGA convened a meeting of more than 80 impacted stakeholders from across Canada's agriculture and seed value chain to discuss shared concerns and next steps in response to these closures. In the coming weeks and months, CSGA will continue working with partners across the sector to fully assess the implications and identify constructive paths forward. Any solution must begin with a clear recognition that public research capacity is a long-term investment in Canada's agricultural performance and global competitiveness.

Canada's seed system is a strategic national asset that requires sustained investment in plant breeding to deliver future innovation and productivity for Canadian agriculture.

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