

**North American
Export Grain
Association, Inc.**



October 19, 2007

Dr. Marcia Holden
Biologist
National Institute of Standards and Technology
NIST Building 227,
Room A215
100 Bureau Drive,
Mail Stop 8312
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-8312

Dear Dr. Holden,

I am writing to request and encourage the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to work promptly to develop a strategy and work plan of research activities directed towards improved measurements and international harmonization of plant biotechnology testing.

The North American Grain Export Association (NAEGA), a not for profit trade association, established in 1912, consists of private and publicly owned companies and farmer-owned cooperatives that are involved in and provide services to the bulk grain and oilseed exporting industry. NAEGA's mission is to promote and sustain the development of commercial export of grain and oilseed trade from the United States and in markets throughout the world. The introduction and rapid expansion of agricultural crops produced via modern biotechnology has created new opportunities and challenges that impact US grain and oilseed trade. NAEGA is working with its members, their customers, counterpart organizations around the world, government officials and other stakeholders here and abroad to address the commercial and regulatory challenges created by the rapid introduction and expansion of biotechnology.

As a general principle for the implementation of agricultural biotechnology, NAEGA believes that the mandatory sampling and testing of commercial grains and oilseeds for genetic content unnecessarily increases costs, decreases competitiveness, and restricts liquidity of US origin production in global commodity markets and should be avoided; however if foreign governments dictate that such testing occur, then the US government should use federally appropriated funding to develop and gain international acceptance for sampling and testing procedures that do not impede commercial grain and oilseed export operations.

We believe there is a role for the Department of Commerce and NIST in helping improve the metrology science related to biotechnology testing, enabling the harmonization and validation of detection methods for plant biotechnology products, and improving

harmonization in this area including the production, distribution and use of their reference materials.

The export grain industry is currently faced with a lack of global consistency around DNA-based metrology associated with enforcing labeling thresholds of biotech crops by regulatory authorities in key export destination markets for U.S. export (primarily corn and soybean) markets. In alignment with our general principles, NAEGA is requesting the leadership of NIST develop and execute projects directed at improving the science, predictability, and harmonization of methods in this area.

Much of our concern is predicated on the global development of multiple national DNA detection methods and creation of unique reference materials by regulatory agencies such as the EU, Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Singapore and to some degree in Mexico, all of which represent major markets for US grain and oilseeds. The primary purpose of these methods is compliance and enforcement testing of food and feed. Several other countries are looking to develop similar compliance and enforcement methods and we fear that this diversity in methods and reference materials create significant testing risks for exported grain and increase the potential for the disruption of global food and feed supply chains, including US exports.

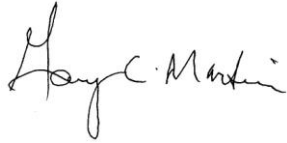
NAEGA members have been educating the global metrology community on the need for standards and standardization in the use of compliance and enforcement testing by PCR since 2003. These consultations have included the Consultative Committee for the Amount of Substance (CCQM) of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) as well as the National Research Council in Canada on the standards and method validation requirements to minimize the disruption of the implementation of agricultural biotechnology into the food and feed supply chains. More recently, the grain industry has consulted directly with NIST as part of the consultative process initiated by NIST for Measurement Needs Datum as part of the NIST National Measurement System Assessment. During these interactions guidance of the grain industry needs were shared. We are looking forward to progressive action from the metrology community to respond to this need.

We are encouraged by the preliminary activities of NIST (U.S.) and the NRC (Canada) and the interest they have shown to Crop Life International (CLI) to address the challenges of linking measurements to standards in DNA-based metrology applied to biotechnology-derived crops.

Please accept this request and encouragement to develop a strategy and work plan of research activities directed towards improved measurements and international harmonization of testing with special focus on screening methods, and the contribution of reference materials to that goal. More specifically we are supportive of the recent recommendations that came from the meetings CLI held with NIST and NRC in 2007 to build a project plan that will result in the ability to link 35S and NOS measurements to standards, in order to establish an international means by which DNA-based metrology can be harmonized.

I very much appreciate your consideration and response. Progress on this matter is timely. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary C. Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "M".

Gary C. Martin
President and CEO

Cc: John Hoffman, President, American Soybean Association
Sharon Bomer, Executive Vice President, BIO
John Thaemert, President, NAWG
Ron Litterer, President, NCGA
Kendell Keith, President, NGFA
Mike Yost, FAS Administrator, USDA
Kenneth Hobbie, President and CEO, USGC
Dan Duran, CEO, USSEC
Alan Tracy, President, US Wheat Associates