



**Position of the  
ESA Section Oil and Fibre Seed  
on the OECD-rules for the Varietal Certification of Hybrid Oil Seed Rape**

Brussels, 30/10/2003

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The ESA Section Oil and Fibre Seed (ESA SOF) is in favour of a modification of the OECD-rules with regard to the certification requirements for hybrid oilseed rape (*Brassica napus*). In that respect, the same request is put forward that was proposed to the EU-Commission and the experts from the EU Member States. The new EU requirements have been adopted in 2003 after consultation with delegates of ESA SOF. They include for the production of hybrids of *Brassica napus* using male sterility systems:

- a male sterility of the female component of at least 99 % for the production of basic seed and 98 % for the production of certified seed
- a varietal purity for the production of certified seed of the male component of 99.7 % and of the female component of 99 %

According to the EU-rules, the minimum varietal purity of the certified seed shall be 90 %. ESA SOF had asked for a minimum varietal purity of 85 % or to have no threshold for the varietal purity of the certified seed at all (like for maize). There is statistical evidence that the performance of the variety does not suffer from a reduction of the varietal purity to 85 % or even lower (80 %, 75 %). The standards for varietal purity of the basic seed are considered to be sufficient for the production of high quality certified seed. At the same time, the cost for the production of seeds of hybrid rapeseed could be reduced considerably.

The experts of the Standing Committee for Seeds of the EU would not follow the ESA SOF argumentation on this issue. They have, however, indicated that they would be willing to reconsider their decision in the light of additional evidence.

ESA SOF asks the OECD seed experts to consider this modification with regard to the varietal purity of the certified seed of hybrids of *Brassica napus*.

Brussels, October 2003