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Michel Cormier

Hello My name is Michel Cormier. I'm the acting commissioner for the Plant Breeders' Rights Office in Canada which is part of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

The Canadian Plant Breeders' Rights Act required at the time that the Act came into effect that we, that a review be conducted to document the effect of the legislation after 10 years of implementation and this review was conducted and tabled in Parliament in 2002. The purpose of the 10-year review was to assess how the Plant Breeders' Rights Act resulted in stimulating investment in plant breeding, improving access to foreign varieties, protecting Canadian varieties abroad, improving varieties to the benefit of the public such as farmers and nurserymen and any other public advantage, so during that period of review it was identified that Canadian farmers and nurserymen obtained greater access to more and better varieties with increased yield, increased disease resistance and increased drought tolerance. The Plant Breeders' Rights Act appeared to have had the most impact on access to foreign varieties; for example in the first year that the Act was implemented 97 per cent of our applications for potato varieties were from foreign breeders. Plant variety protection enabled the industry sector to develop partnerships, links and improved access to foreign varieties. Some horticulture and agriculture industries improved their export capabilities or they became net exporters of their products, particularly in floriculture, the pulse and potato and nursery industries. For example processed potato exports went up by 200 million in seven years. During the review period the number of companies and organizations in Canada which were involved with, in the seed industry increased by 40 per cent, so overall the rate of variety development and availability of new varieties in Canada increased faster during the 10 years after the Act was implemented than ever before and the Plant Breeders' Rights Act appears to be one factor of many that has had a positive impact on the availability of new varieties.