



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



**The International Treaty**  
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**Views, Experiences and Best Practices as an example of possible options for  
the national implementation of Article 9 of the International Treaty**

*Note by the Secretary*

*At its [second meeting](#) of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers' Rights (AHTEG), the Expert Group agreed on a revised version of the [template](#) for collecting information on examples of national measures, best practices and lessons learned from the realization of Farmers' Rights*

*This document presents the updated information on best practices and measures of implementing Article 9 of the International Treaty submitted by Canada 31 July 2019.*

*The submission is presented in the form and language in which it was received.*



**Title of measure/practice:** Potato Accelerated Release Program

**Date of submission:** July 31, 2019

**Name(s) of country/countries in which the measure/practice is taking place:** Canada

**Responsible institution/organization (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s) and contact person)**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Fredericton Research and Development Centre, 850  
Lincoln Road, P.O. Box 20280, Fredericton, New Brunswick, E3B 4Z7.  
Contact person: Andrea Dilworth

**Type of institution/organization (categories):** Department of the Federal Government of  
Canada

**Collaborating/supporting institutions/organizations/actors, if applicable (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s)):**

Seed potato producers and potato processors from across Canada, Provincial grower associations

### **Description of the examples**

#### **Mandatory information:**

See notes below <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>

#### **Short summary to be put in the inventory (max. 200 words):**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Potato Accelerated Release Program began in 1998. It is a two-phase process to fast track the release of promising potato selections developed at the Fredericton and Lethbridge Research and Development Centres of AAFC to the producers. In phase one, 10-15 new selections are offered to potato producers each February for two years of non-exclusive field testing. These early favorites are typically at year six of a testing and selection program that traditionally took about twelve years. For a fee of \$100 per selection, plus applicable taxes, growers receive a limited quantity of breeder's selection seed and non-exclusive rights to conduct their own field performance and quality evaluation trials for two years. In phase two, following the non-exclusive testing, AAFC invites potato producers to submit cash bids to procure a further three-year period of exclusive testing. At the end of this testing, or sooner at the request of the producer and farmers, an eight-year, renewable license to commercialize a selection may be negotiated. In 2018, in consultation with growers representatives, AAFC began the process of modernizing its potato breeding and commercialization programs. This process is currently still in progress.

(193 words)

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<sup>1</sup>This mandatory information is required in order for the measure/practice to be included in the Inventory.

<sup>2</sup> Please select only one category that is most relevant, under which the measure will be listed.

<sup>3</sup> Please select one or several categories that may also be relevant (if applicable).



**Brief history (including starting year), as appropriate**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Potato Accelerated Release Program began in 1998. Selections released under the Accelerated Release Program have cleared six years of field and laboratory selection and are backed by data from preliminary disease and performance evaluation trials. The AAFC research team, representing a variety of scientific disciplines, works closely with farmers, packers, French fry and chip processors and exporters to develop potato varieties that are better suited to Canadian production and which meet farmers and consumer requirements for quality and flavour. Using a combination of traditional breeding techniques and new and emerging technologies, the team releases 10 to 15 new selections annually that have been selected from among 120,000.

**Description of the context and the history of the measure/practice is taking place (political, legal and economic framework conditions for the measure/practice) (max 200 words)**

The Accelerated Release Program was designed to speed up the release of cultivars to the growers after the fifth field generation rather than after the traditional 10-12 years with traditional breeding programs. This program was created because the growers requested earlier participation in the selection process. Initially, the Program focused on french fry selections, but by the tenth year, had expanded to include fresh market, chip, and pigmented flesh selections. Information provided to the sector about the selections has evolved throughout the program and now includes disease reaction information, notes on defects, photographs and data tables that are available online.

**To which provision(s) of Article 9 of the International Treaty does this measure relate**

Article 9.1	
Article 9.2 a	
Article 9.2 b	<b>X</b>
Article 9.2 c	<b>X</b>
Article 9.3	



**Other information, if applicable**

- Please indicate which category of the Inventory is most relevant for the proposed measure, and which other categories are also relevant (if any):

No.	Category	Most relevant	Also relevant
1	Recognition of local and indigenous communities', farmers' contributions to conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, such as awards and recognition of custodian/guardian farmers		
2	Financial contributions to support farmers conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA such as contributions to benefit-sharing funds		
3	Approaches to encourage income-generating activities to support farmers' conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA		
4	Catalogues, registries and other forms of documentation of PGRFA and protection of traditional knowledge		
5	In-situ/on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA, such as social and cultural measures, community biodiversity management and conservation sites		
6	Facilitation of farmers' access to a diversity of PGRFA through community seed banks <sup>4</sup> , seed networks and other measures improving farmers' choices of a wider diversity of PGRFA.		
7	Participatory approaches to research on PGRFA, including characterization and evaluation, participatory plant breeding and variety selection	<b>X</b>	
8	Farmers' participation in decision-making at local, national and sub-regional, regional and international levels		<b>X</b>
9	Training, capacity development and public awareness creation		<b>X</b>
10	Legal measures for the implementation of Farmers' Rights, such as legislative measures related to PGRFA.		
11	Other measures / practices		

- **In case you selected 'other measures', would you like to suggest a description of this measure, e.g. as a possible new category?**

NA

<sup>4</sup> Including seed houses



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- **Objective(s)**

Develop better potato varieties for the Canadian potato growers and make them available as soon as possible for testing and capacity development.

- **Target group(s) and numbers of involved and affected farmers<sup>5</sup>**

Seed potato producers and potato processors across Canada. Approximately seventy stakeholders have participated in the program since 1998.

- **Location(s) and geographical outreach**

Open House events are held in New Brunswick, Ontario and Alberta to showcase the new selections being released. Farmers and processors are also invited to participate in field days.

- **Resources used for implementation of the measure/practice**

A team of scientists, technicians, field crews, administrative staff and commercialization officers work together to make this program successful.

- **How has the measure/practice affected the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture?**

The Program allows potato growers to trial new potato selections earlier in their development and in their own fields under their own growing conditions. All licensed varieties are protected by Plant Breeders' Rights in Canada and may be protected by equivalent rights in other countries if licensees wish to commercialize a variety in other countries as well.

- **Please describe the achievements of the measure/ practice so far (including quantification) (max 200 words)**

This program has resulted in over 60 license agreements with collaborators for AAFC potato varieties.

- **Other national level instruments that are linked to the measure/practice. NA**

- **Are you aware of any other international agreements or programs that are relevant for this measure/practice? No**

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<sup>5</sup> Any classification, e.g. of the types of farmer addressed, may be country-specific.



- **Other issues you wish to address, that have not yet been covered, to describe the measure/practice**

#### **Lessons learned**

- **Describe lessons learned which may be relevant for others who wish to do the same or similar measures/practices (max 250 words).**

Commercialization rights are currently awarded solely based on a cash bid process, rather than on a full proposal. This means that a bidder could submit the highest bid, but may not be the best candidate to commercialize a variety due to a lack of business experience, industry connections, or local markets. This is currently being reviewed as part of the program modernization.

- **What challenges encountered along the way (if applicable) (max 200 words):**

A “one size fits all” program does not always work for all major sectors of the potato sector (fresh market, chipping, French fry). It can be challenging to gather grower feedback regarding the performance of varieties in field trials. Not all selections are well suited to the different growing conditions in all regions of Canada, so a large number of provincial trial sites across Canada are required to adequately evaluate new potato selections.

- **What would you consider conditions for success, if others should seek to carry out such a measure or organize such an activity? (max 100 words):**

Growers participation and feedback is key for the successful uptake of varieties.

#### **Further information**

- **Link(s) to further information about the measure/practice**  
[www.agr.gc.ca/potato-cultivars](http://www.agr.gc.ca/potato-cultivars) (English)  
[www.agr.gc.ca/cultivars-pommesdeterre](http://www.agr.gc.ca/cultivars-pommesdeterre) (French)