

List of questions relating to the draft “Guidance for Seed Testing at Forestry Commission Approved Forest Tree Seed Testing Facilities”

Detailed guidance has been prepared in the draft “*Guidance for Seed Testing at Forestry Commission Approved Forest Tree Seed Testing Facilities*” (Appendix 1) and we would now welcome your views on its usefulness and suitability.

The FC, in developing this guidance is attempting to apply the rigour of internationally accepted techniques where they exist and to do so in a way which follows the Better Regulation principles by avoiding unnecessary burdens on business. We are also attempting to maintain plausible comparisons of seed test results between laboratories. This is especially important for cases of dispute between suppliers and customers.

Germination:

The germination temperatures used need to be monitored and maintained within the +/- 2°C limits imposed by ISTA.

Internationally approved germination temperatures are often an alternating 20-30°C with 8 hr of lights during the 30°C phase of the temperature cycle. This is not a cheap option or necessarily an easy temperature regime to maintain.

Based on FC published papers on the optimal conditions for conifer seed germination a constant 20°C +/- 2°C would be a good compromise, relatively easy to achieve and suitable for most species. To maximise the germination conditions lights for 8hrs during every 24hr period could be used.

Although this is not consistent for all the tree species covered by the ISTA rules it allows standardisation within the FC approved seed testing laboratories in the UK.

A special case can be made for *Fagus sylvatica* where the recommended ‘normal’ prechill temperature of 3-5°C +/- 2°C is also better as the germination temperature to detect the ‘real’ germination potential of the seed lot. Note: this is also the germination temperature recommended in the current ISTA Rules.

Question 6) Is the germination regime, described in the guidance, workable and/or acceptable?

Other:

Question 7) Is there a need for maximum seed lot weights (Tables 1A and 1B)? Are the quantities shown acceptable?

Consultation on seed testing standards and procedures

Question 8) Para 1.6.2 suggests applying to the FC for authorisation to reduce testing on occasions where seeds lots are very valuable or in economic terms, very small. An alternative approach would be to include certain 'rules' for decision making in the guidance so that such an approach does not need to be made to the FC. Which would be more preferable to the industry?

Question 9) Are submitted sample and working sample weights reasonable?

Question 10) Procedures for rounding the germination results have been added. Are they acceptable?

Question 11) Is there sufficient explanation on carrying out or assessing the tetrazolium test?

Question 12) Is there sufficient information on the "excised-embryo" test?

Question 13) Are there any useful sources of information that could be added to para 1.8?

Question 14) Procedures for moisture testing have been added. Are they acceptable?