

# California Seed Association Fact Sheet Series



## Background

Coexistence for crop agriculture can be defined as the sustainable production of seed, food and fiber from diverse plant varieties, crop types and production practices within a common geographic area.

Unique farming systems have been coexisting within California for decades. California farmers grow 350 recognized crop and livestock commodities under a variety of farming conditions - organic, conventional and biotech - often on adjoining fields. Coexistence principles have been the key to successful diversification of plant varieties and production systems for food and seed as practiced by growers and stewarded by national and international seed associations from 70 countries over the last 100 years.

The foundation of coexistence is good communication among growers, handlers, shippers and marketers and respect for each others' practices and requirements. There is general agreement in agriculture that a zero tolerance or 100% purity standard is not practical in field production systems, but pragmatic tolerances and thresholds for the presence of low levels of undesired materials allow efficient marketing while meeting end use quality and safety criteria.

It is customary that the primary responsibility for meeting specific or more stringent market standards is on the entity economically benefiting from it, usually the producer who is compensated for higher quality products.

## More Information

**California Crop Improvement Association** (<http://ccia.ucdavis.edu>)

**Seed Biotechnology Center** (<http://sbc.ucdavis.edu/files/200672.pdf>)

**National Organic Program** (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/programs-offices/national-organic-program>)

**American Seed Trade Association** (<http://www.amseed.org/pdfs/issues/biotech/coexistence-in-seed-industry.pdf>)

**California Seed Association** (<http://www.calseed.org>)

**Methods to Maintain Genetic Purity of Seed Stocks**  
(<http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8189.pdf>)

**Genetic Engineering and Organic Production Systems**  
(<http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8188.pdf>)

**Cultivating Coexistence** (<http://www.croplife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/CLCCoexistenceBMPEN.pdf>)

Q

**What is coexistence in agriculture?**

A

Simultaneous production of crops using diverse methods - conventional, organic and biotech.

California  Seed Association