

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Historical Materials from University of
Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Extension

November 2013

EC167 What is Certified Seed?

D. L. Gross

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Gross, D. L., "EC167 What is Certified Seed?" (2013). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 2119.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/2119>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

AGRT
EC-167
S
8S
E7
#16

WHAT IS Certified Seed?

RECEIVED

DEC 2 1970

AGRICULTURE

WITH UNBROKEN SEAL THIS SACK CONTAINS
NEBRASKA STATE CERTIFIED SEED

Kind of Seed	% Germination	Kernel Type
Grower	% Hard Seed	% Lot No.
Address	% Total Germ. & Hard Seed	% Grade
Pure Seed	% Date Tested	% Damage
Crop Seed	Name and No. of Noxious Weed Seeds per oz.	Origin
Inert Matter		
Weed Seed		

(State of Nebraska Approved Official Label)

This Tag -

**IS YOUR GUARANTEE of
GENUINENESS • PURITY • PERFORMANCE**

• • • • •

EXTENSION SERVICE - AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

UN

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN



R02378 94628

lincoln

EC-167

WHAT IS CERTIFIED SEED?

D. L. Gross

The Experiment Station Develops New Crop Varieties.

When a new crop variety of superior merit is developed by the Experiment Station, small lots of seed are distributed to farmers for increase and distribution. Unless some plan is followed by which the continued purity of this seed can be safeguarded, and by which the Station can be assured of this purity, the seed for all practical purposes becomes lost. If, under these circumstances, the Station, the Department of Agronomy or county agricultural agents are asked to indicate a source of pure seed of this variety other than from the Station, they cannot do so with assurance since they do not know whether the growers have kept the original stock free from mixtures of other varieties and free of noxious weed seed or diseases.

A Dependable Source of Seed Must Be Maintained.

In order to overcome this difficulty, a system of "seed certification" has been set up. Under this system the original seed of a new variety is distributed only to those farmers who agree to have the crop from it "certified" and who have a reputation for being careful growers. These growers increase the new variety under a set of rules which, if followed, will prevent mixtures and contamination with noxious weed seeds, or of certain types of diseases. Growers of certified seed pay nominal fees to have their crop inspected before and after harvest, including a rigid laboratory analysis and germination test. Field inspection work is done by men trained in this type of work. After inspections are completed a list

of the growers whose fields and seed meet inspection requirements, is prepared and distributed to prospective buyers. Thus a perpetuating procedure is set up through which a dependable source of seed of the better varieties is made available.

Certified Seed Is Established by Law.

Seed certification is established in Nebraska under special legislation. This requires that seed certification be carried out under the direction of the Dean of the College of Agriculture, who may designate a responsible non-profit organization to conduct the details of the work.

The Nebraska Crop Improvement Association.

This association has been designated by the Dean of the Agricultural College as the seed certification agency for small grains, corn, sorghums, soybeans, field beans, flax and legume and grass seeds. This association has a secretary and seed certification manager who have their offices at the College of Agriculture at Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Nebraska Certified Potato Growers' Non-Stock Cooperative.

This association has been designated as the official organization for the certification of seed potatoes. It has its office at Alliance, Nebraska. It deals primarily with seed potatoes grown for sale in the southern states where locally grown potatoes are used entirely for market purposes. In this association, there are two separate divisions, namely, the "Certification Department" and the "Sales Department". The certification department has complete charge of potato certification activities.

Rules for Certification.

The Dean of the College, through a committee designated as the "certification committee", prescribes the certification standards and rules which deal with seed purity and with the designation of those crop varieties which shall become eligible for certification. Such varieties must also be approved by the Experiment Station.

The certifying agencies mentioned above have the authority to prescribe rules dealing with administrative matters such as fees, filing applications, submitting seed samples for testing, etc. Copies of the rules for the certification of each crop may be had through the certifying association and through county agricultural agents.

Fees for Field and Seed Inspection.

The certified seed law prescribes that all seed certification work shall be carried out on a cost basis with a reasonable sum held in reserve. The certifying agencies must therefore determine what the certification fees shall be for each crop and adjust them if the fees collected prove to be insufficient or in excess of the amount necessary for conducting the certification work. A copy of the rules for certification as mentioned above lists also the required fees for each crop.

Who Can Be a Certified Seed Grower?

Any farmer in Nebraska may become a certified seed grower provided he follows the prescribed rules. The new certified seed grower must start with certified or foundation seed. He must plant his crop on land free of other crops or other varieties and free of noxious weed seeds. The seed field for some crops must be isolated a prescribed

distance from other fields of the same crop in order to prevent contamination by the movement of pollen from the non-certified field. Care must be taken in harvesting, threshing, and binning to prevent mixtures, weed contamination or damage to the seed. The seed must be kept free or nearly free of preventable diseases such as smut in small grain, or certain diseases in potatoes.

Is the Production of Certified Seed Profitable?

Some farmers have been certified seed growers for many years, have made very substantial profits from the sale of certified seed, and have given the major portion of their time to this enterprise. Some, on the other hand, grow a limited amount of certified seed each year in order that they keep their own seed eligible for certification and at the same time provide a supply of pure seed for their neighbors. There is a need for both types of growers, depending upon the kind of crops grown.

Penalties for Violation of Rules.

As prescribed by the certified seed law, the seed certification agencies may assess penalties against those who knowingly violate certification rules. Penalties applied by the certifying agencies are limited to the withholding of seed certification privileges for a prescribed length of time. Certified seed growers must, of course comply with all state and National laws with respect to the labeling and shipment of seed.

Certified Seed Protected by Law.

The term "State Certified Seed" is protected by the certified seed law and no person can use this term in connection with the sale of seed

unless the seed is produced under the procedures outlined herein.

County Crop Improvement Associations.

Local county crop improvement associations aid greatly in the production and distribution of certified seed. These associations are made up of certified seed growers who join together to pool their interests in the production, cleaning, sacking, labeling, tagging and sale of their seed. Car lot shipments of certified seed are facilitated where such associations exist. This greatly expands the outlet possibilities for certified seed, and at the same time usually means a better price.

One of the great problems of the certified seed program has been the matter of seed purity. In too many instances the individual grower does not have adequate cleaning equipment. In such instances the seed might need to be sold at a discount for subsequent cleaning by the purchaser or declared ineligible for certification. In a few instances growers have sold uncleaned seed as certified seed and have suffered legal penalties as prescribed by the state seed laws. These instances are unfortunate and do not occur where the grower is well informed. They could hardly occur at all where a local association has adequate cleaning and processing equipment and is in a position to process, bag, tag and sell the seed for the individual growers. County agricultural agents and the certification manager of the Nebraska Crop Improvement Association, College of Agriculture, Lincoln, are in a position to advise with groups interested in forming local associations.