



# The North Dakota Seed Journal

JUNE 2005

Newsletter of the North Dakota State Seed Department

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## Seed Quality Exceeds Expectations in 2005

*Jim Swanson, Seed Regulatory Manager*

If overall results of tests done on Regulatory samples are any indication, it appears that the seed prepared for 2005 planting was generally of good quality. Early expectations based on last year's growing conditions and the fact that a substantial portion of the 2004 crop was put into storage at high moisture and/or dried at high temperatures led us to expect that we would see some problems with seed quality.

Some of the early fall tests showed potential problems with low germ and extended dormancy. Some of the fall samples that were tested showed symptoms of poor quality and the tests bore that out. Seed producers either eliminated those seed lots early or conditions changed during storage and the potential problems disappeared.

Regulatory samples that have been tested up to the time of this writing have been better than average for germination compliance.

I believe that because of the early awareness of the potential problems, the seed industry was more cognizant of the quality of the product they were marketing, and took precautions to make sure the product was of good quality by early and frequent testing.

The seed industry in North Dakota is to be commended for recognizing the problem with the 2004 production and taking whatever steps necessary to make sure the integrity of their seed remained intact.

## Dates for Seed Conditioner's Clinic Set

**Seed conditioners...** make plans now to attend the **2005 Seed Conditioner's Clinic** November 8 and 9 at the Fargo Civic Center for seed conditioners approved to handle certified seed and those who wish to be. The primary purpose of the clinic will be to educate conditioners about:

- Seed Department policies and procedures
- Plant Variety Protection issues
- State and federal seed laws
- Seed-handling equipment

It will be a great opportunity to learn from industry experts how to properly condition and handle certified seed to maintain product quality and remain in compliance with state and federal seed laws. More details will be sent to approved conditioners later this summer once plans have been finalized.

North Dakota State

**NDSSD**

Seed Department

*The North Dakota Seed Journal is published and edited by the Seed Department, State of North Dakota, under the provisions of Chap. 258, S.L. 1931, as administrative and instrumental matter required for effective transaction of the Department's business and for properly fostering the general welfare of the seed industry in the state.*

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## From the Commissioner's Desk

Perhaps it's Legislative Session post-partum issues, but re-focusing is one of the things that many people involved in the process have to work at immediately following the biennial madness.

It shouldn't be so difficult, but I've struggled with finding a topic for this issue of Seed Journal since our fearless editor laid down the deadline for submitting articles, now three days past. Instead, random thoughts have swirled around this duty/assignment for the past few days.

Being one of those who enjoy a well-placed quote or cliché, I have decided to "go with the flow" and work with both the random thought and quote issues simultaneously.

*"You can't fool Mother Nature,"* and, *"fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me."* (author unknown)

Will last year's early frost really impact acreages of long season (i.e. corn, soybeans) crop production in 2005, or will we see a reversal of the five-year upward trend in production of these commodities? Statistics on the expansion of production in both of these crops is truly amazing, considering the climatic conditions of the northern

plains. Development of early maturing varieties is pushing the risk-taking to some degree, but stories of straight corn/soybean rotations in northern North Dakota are still surprising.

*"When I see the crowd moving one direction, I run the other way,"* (paraphrased, Armand Hammer), or *"a day late, a dollar short"* (author unknown, a favorite of my grandfather)

Who will get it right this year? Flax acres are projected to increase by nearly 75%, field peas and other pulse crops headed up by huge amounts... is this a precursor to market saturation and price depression? Canola increasing by nearly 25%, wheat acres on the way up... does any of this matter given the US/Canada/global supply issues?

Interestingly, the seed industry always has to be a year or more out front of the crowd in terms of predicting the future. There are always "shortages," depending on the hot crop or variety for the year. Seedsmen are forced to have an eye for these things. By the way, it's ten times worse in the potato seed industry, where multiple types, varieties, strains and generations of seed try to meet a demand that must be predicted **years** in advance.

And finally, a few of my personal favorites... just because we are in the random mode.

*"He's/they're crazy. There are squirrels in his head, and they're fighting with knives."* (Robert Barone from 'Everybody Loves Raymond')

This one is useful in a variety of ways and situations. Heck, I can think of daily instances when it might apply to a person/situation I'm involved with. Mostly, it's just a funny visual image that lightens the day. I've heard it used in describing the legislative session, but NOT by me.

*"If each of us hires people smaller than we are, we shall become a company of dwarfs."* (David Ogilvy)

I just like this one, and think of it every time I look at bringing people on to our team at the Seed Department. As for what we do here; *"price is what you pay, value is what you get"* (Warren Buffett)

And finally, *"My ears don't work well when my mouth is moving."* (K. Bertsch)

That applies to talking, or in this case, writing. Time to move on, I hear field inspection season approaching. Best wishes for a safe and profitable spring.

- Ken Bertsch ..... State Seed Commissioner
- Steve Sebesta ..... Deputy Seed Commissioner
- Steve Marquardt ..... Director, Potato Program
- James Swanson ..... Seed Regulatory Manager
- Joe Magnusson ..... Seed Certification Manager
- Mark Hafdahl ..... Seed Laboratory Manager
- Jeff Prischmann .... Diagnostic Laboratory Manager
- Kris Nicklay ..... Administrative Officer
- Galen Briese ..... Field Seed Specialist
- Mike Oosterwijk ..... Potato Program Supervisor

**Seed Producers...** be certain your seed fields have been inspected by ND State Seed Department inspectors before you begin harvesting. Fields harvested before the inspection is completed will not be eligible for certification and you will forfeit the inspection fees.

If you are ready to harvest and you are not certain your seed fields have been inspected, call your inspector or the State Seed Department at (701) 231-5400.



## Field Days a Good Way to Learn About New Varieties

Several new and exciting crop varieties are being introduced this year by private and public breeding programs. Field days are an excellent way to learn the attributes of new varieties and compare phenotypes with established varieties. All of the NDSU Research Extension Centers conduct field days to communicate the results of their research projects, explain current research and display new crop varieties. See the calendar on back for a schedule of NDSU field days.

## Preparing Your Fields for Inspection

Joe Magnusson, Certification Manager

Seed growers are encouraged to check fields for the following problems that often contribute to failed inspections.

### Isolation

An isolation strip is required between *inseparable* crops. All small grain crops, if planted adjacent to each other, need an isolation strip between them. A ditch, fencerow, or roadway adjacent to your field may also suffice as an isolation strip. If not left at seeding, the isolation must be mowed or tilled prior to inspection. If you decide to mow the isolation, you must remove part of the field to be inspected. If you mow, make sure the crop debris is thrown away from the field to be inspected so you do not contaminate your seed field. If the isolation is not in place at the time of inspection the field will be rejected. If you are producing both registered and certified seed of the same variety in the same field and they are both to be inspected, you may place a flag on each end of the field, five feet into the higher-class seed (registered) and harvest that portion as the lower class (certified).

### Contamination

Check the area where you started seeding, as this is a likely spot for contamination if you did not clean your seeding equipment properly. Run-off from heavy rain can dislodge seed from furrows and move it from field to field. Inspect these areas for other crops or varieties. If your field is along a road or railroad track, evaluate approximately 100 feet into the field to determine if seed has blown from trucks or rail cars. Watch field margins for volunteer caused by tillage operations that may spread stubble onto adjacent fields. Check headlands and field borders where planting equipment may have inadvertently overlapped. Also, check your dry fertilizer as it may contain seed that has not been cleaned out of the container it was delivered in. Think about previous crop plantings. We have seen small grains that had survived four years in the soil, especially in the drier areas. They will also grow in your row crop fields and reseed themselves for the coming year.

### Weeds

All growers should know what field bindweed looks like. If found and left uncontrolled by either spray or isolation the field will be rejected. Watch for bindweed along ditches, fencerows, tree rows, hilltops, rockpiles and old farm sites. Wild oat patches will be rejected in your fields, and you must avoid these areas during harvest. In field peas, another major concern is patches of Canada thistle. All areas in a pea field that contain thistle will be rejected.

Please take time to evaluate your seed production fields before the inspector arrives. If you notice a problem, contact the North Dakota State Seed Dept. for further guidance. And remember it is very important to look at your field inspection report before you harvest to note any problem areas that need correction.

## Research Fees Due September 15

For the last 18 months or so, we have communicated the message that NDSU and SDSU were joining other public and private breeding programs in assessing research fees on new varieties. The North Dakota State Seed Department is responsible for the collection of research fees and payment to the variety owners.

***Labelers must pay the fees on all Registered and Certified classes of royalty-bearing varieties sold for seed.***

In preparation, we have made some minor modifications to our report form that we believe will improve the reporting process and make it easier to work with. Our goal is to minimize the amount of confusion that may arise.

In July labelers will receive a Research Fee Report Form indicating the number of bushels of each royalty-bearing variety labeled in their name. The form will provide for the reporting of certain credits such as seed the labeler plants on their own farm, carryover, etc. Labelers are required to complete the form and remit payment to the Seed Department by September 15.

# Seed Department Deadlines

- June 15....** Field inspection applications due for all crops except conventional soybeans, buckwheat and millet. Potato field inspection applications due.
- June 30....** License applications due for wholesale potato dealers
- July 1 .....** Bulk certificates due
- July 15 ....** Field inspection applications due for conventional soybeans, buckwheat and millet
- July 31 ....** Labeling fee report due
- Sept 15....** Research fees due
- Oct 1 .....** Carry-over seed report due
- Dec 31 .....** License applications due for Approved Conditioners
- Dec 31 .....** License applications due for Bulk Retail Facilities
- Dec 31 .....** License applications due for non-resident seed dealers



## Plant North Dakota Certified Seed

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# Potato Virus Testing Begins in July

Jeff Prischmann, Diagnostic Lab Manager

Virus testing season will soon be here for potato growers. Here are a few tips to remember when submitting leaflets for virus and GMO testing.

1. Whenever possible, pick leaves in the morning before the heat of the day. Leaflets should be placed into a perforated, plastic zipper bag and promptly stored in a cooler or refrigerator. Samples should not be placed directly onto ice or cooling packs as this may freeze the sample. It is important to prevent leaflets from overheating and producing excess condensation in the bag as both of these can cause rapid sample deterioration. Vegetable bags work well for sending samples as they contain perforations to allow the leaflets to “breathe.” Do not pack or seal non-perforated bags too tightly. If shipping leaflets through the mail, use a styrofoam cooler with appropriate cooling packs.
2. We need 400 leaflets for each test, therefore a sample of at least 410 leaflets is required. Select only the larger and cleaner leaflets towards the top half of plants. Both tests can be conducted with the same sample.
3. Identify your samples with the printed tags provided to you. A tag will be printed for each field. You may discard the tags you do not need.
- 4 It is important that a good, representative sample of the field is taken. Your test results are only as good as the sample submitted for testing.



The summer virus test typically begins by the third week of July. National survey and latent carrier tests (Russet Norkotah, Shepody, and Silverton for PVY) are required. All other tests are strictly voluntary. Other tests typically performed include the viruses PVX and PVY as well as a GMO test for Bt-Cry3a. In early July, each grower will be mailed more detailed information about this testing program. Any questions should be directed to the department.

## Sebesta Named Deputy Seed Commissioner

NDSSD Director of Field Seed Programs Steve Sebesta has been promoted to the position of Deputy Seed Commissioner. State Seed Commissioner Ken Bertsch announced Sebesta's appointment following the State Seed Commission meeting on February 24th in Bismarck.

Sebesta joined the Seed Department in May 2003 as director of field seed programs, continuing a 23 year career in the seed industry including plant breeding, seed production and management. “Steve has proven in a short period of time a great knowledge of the seed industry, along with outstanding skills in personnel and program management,” said Commissioner Bertsch. “I welcome the chance to have Steve expand his duties at the department, and look forward to working closely with him in administrative areas of our agency.”

The State Seed Commission unanimously approved the Commissioner's recommendation of Sebesta's appointment. Sebesta will be responsible for leadership of Field Seed, Regulatory and Laboratory Services programs of the Seed Department. Additionally, he will cooperate in budget, government relations and public information functions for the department.

## New Bin Requirements Proposed

The Seed Department has begun the process of drafting the necessary language to strengthen the requirements for specific types of equipment approved seed conditioners and retail facilities must have to handle certified seed.

One of the requirements that will be added will require all hopper bottom bins used for storage of certified seed to have bottom access ports. Access ports are essential for two reasons. First and foremost is the safety of your employees. Falls are a leading source of workplace injuries and a major liability for any facility where above-ground-work occurs. Bottom access ports will eliminate the need for climbing bins when cleaning or inspecting. Second, bottom access ports facilitate proper cleaning of bins. Approved conditioning plant and bulk retail facility agreements currently require these facilities to clean all bins in which certified seed is stored. We believe that this new requirement will facilitate a safe and practical means by which this can be fulfilled.

Additionally, we will require installation of sampling ports, or poke holes, in hopper bins. Sampling ports will permit the collection of regulatory samples, and make re-sampling easier when necessary. They will practically eliminate the need to run several hundred bushels of seed out of the bottom of each bin, which will also save your product.

It is proposed that bottom access ports and sampling ports will be required in all hopper bottom bins by November 1, 2006, thereby allowing facilities adequate time for installation of the ports, either professionally or by utilizing do-it-yourself kits.

## North Dakota State Seed Department

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# NDSSD Calendar

- June 15** ..... Field inspection applications due for all crops except conventional soybeans, buckwheat and millet
- June 16** ..... Field Day, Central Grasslands REC — Streeter
- June 30** ..... License applications due for wholesale potato dealers
- July 1** ..... Bulk certificates due
- July 12** ..... Field Day, Hettinger REC — Hettinger
- July 13** ..... Field Day, Dickinson REC — Dickinson
- July 14** ..... Field Day, Williston REC — Williston
- July 15** ..... Field inspection applications due for conventional soybeans, buckwheat and millet
- July 18** ..... Field Day, Agronomy Seed Farm — Casselton
- July 19** ..... Field Day, Carrington REC — Carrington
- July 20** ..... Field Day, North Central REC — Minot
- July 21** ..... Field Day, Langdon REC — Langdon
- July 31** ..... Labeling fee report due
- Aug 9** ..... Field Day, Oakes Irrigation REC — Oakes
- Sept 15** ..... Research fees due