



The North Dakota Seed Journal

JUNE 2009

Newsletter of the North Dakota State Seed Department

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Apply for Field Inspection

The department receives a number of calls each year from producers wanting to certify seed produced on fields that were not field inspected. For whatever reason, they did not apply for field inspection and when the opportunity arose to sell that seed, they couldn't.

Due to the weather conditions this spring, some producers may be uncertain whether their fields will be suitable for seed production. This much is certain; fields that are not inspected are not eligible for certification. Economically, it makes more sense to apply before the deadline at the regular rate and cancel the inspection later if need be. If a field is cancelled, all inspection fees, less \$20, are refunded to the applicant. Late fees are \$1 per acre so for an average 160 acre small grain field, postponing that decision will cost an additional \$160.

Certification requirements vary by crop, but there are two universal components to producing certified seed.

1. **Field Inspection.** Supported by the documentation provided by the applicant and varietal information supplied by the breeder, the field inspection is designed to determine whether the field meets the established certified seed standards for genetic purity and varietal identity. The production field must be inspected during the growing season by a Seed Department inspector. Field inspection alone does not mean the seed is certified. It is the first step.
2. **Final Certification.** Seed harvested from fields that have passed field inspection is eligible for final certification. That process involves the proper conditioning and sampling of the seed, and lab analysis to determine purity and germination percentage. In some crops, the presence of seed-borne disease and other tests may be required. The results of the lab tests are reviewed to determine whether the sample meets the certification standards. Only seed that has passed field inspection AND final certification may be labeled as certified seed. All of the inspections and tests are intended to ensure the consumer is purchasing a product that meets the standards of the certification agency.

Growers who purchased Foundation or Registered class seed for planting in 2009 are strongly encouraged to apply for field inspection. The supply of certain varieties, especially new releases or those that have desirable traits, is usually tight and the demand is almost always predictable. Don't miss an opportunity to increase your profit potential by producing certified seed.

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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Approved Conditioners and Bulk Retailers...

Agreements to operate as an approved conditioner or bulk retailer will be mailed to all current facilities in August. Facility managers are requested to complete the form and return it to the office with the \$40 payment by October 1. Facility inspections will begin in October.



From the Commissioner's Desk

Snow, Floods and Standing Corn

This article is being written on one of the last days of April, and spring of '09 is following the same path as the entire 2008 crop year. I'm not sure a wheel has turned in the entire eastern half of the state, and we've heard of only a few isolated "incidents" of planting in the far west. And, it's snowing today in parts of the state.

Now, late April snows are not abnormal in North Dakota. However, on the heels of what we've experienced over the past year, geez...how about a break from this whole global warming thing?

It's also not abnormal for weather to be the biggest influencer in our industry. Weather here, in the rest of the country or worldwide impacts production, stocks, prices and stress levels. Here, it changes planting intentions and timing more so than other parts of the U.S.

Indecision plays a role as well. I've never been a big believer in planting intentions reports, especially on North Dakota acres. We have too many production options (which is a good thing), and growers who practice a fair amount of flexibility in the spring depending on weather and price factors. With the amount of standing corn and un-tilled

fields out there, I assume that the plan for a high percentage of farms in this state will be finalized when the last field is planted.

Weather even impacts what we do here at the Seed Department. It changes the timing of inspections and even influences the pace at which testing is completed. Sound strange? Imagine hundreds of growers who can't get through snow to storages to pull samples. How about not being able to get a seed conditioner on the farm to clean seed, for fear the entire rig sinks in soft, frost-boiled yards? Our seed testing and final certification work has lagged the entire year; it isn't rocket science to figure that these issues have impacted the pace of work here.

I went down this path in order to mention one other thing. We had another weather related issue that affected our work schedule this spring; flooding. Granted, the Fargo flood of 2009 didn't hit our offices. It did affect our people. A number of us spent the greater part of a ten-day period concerned with our own homes, and a number of us spent a lot of time out of the office dealing with some type of flood related issue. I mention this for two reasons.

First, I want our clients to know how hard our staff worked to make sure that the business of the Department was being done in a timely manner. A few

staff members simply couldn't make it to work for a week, and their teammates did a wonderful job of carrying the extra load. I hope that your testing results were delivered or questions answered in a reasonable amount of time. Please bear with us if not...we work hard to deliver, and I think we do it well under normal circumstances.

Second, I think you should know the type of people that serve you in this agency. I saw people here go well beyond "community service" in helping others, all the while worrying about their jobs and our customers. I saw people here every day, covering their duties at work, and out sandbagging at night... then doing the same thing the next day. I didn't see one fellow the entire week of the emergency, until Friday when he had to come to work to rest up... couldn't lift his arms anymore.

I'm always proud to be a part of the agriculture industry. I'm always impressed by the quality of people and the commitment to their profession, whether producer or servant. Now I'm humbled to be a part of a team like we have here at the Seed Department.

Just thought you should know.

Best wishes for a safe and profitable season.

Ken Bertsch..... State Seed Commissioner
Steve Sebesta..... Deputy Seed Commissioner
Willem Schrage..... Director, Potato Program
Joe Magnusson.....Seed Regulatory Manager
Galen Briese.....Seed Certification Manager
Mark Hafdahl.....Seed Laboratory Manager
Jeff Prischmann..... Diagnostic Laboratory Manager
Kris Nicklay..... Administrative Officer
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.

Preparing for Field Inspection

Galen Briese, Certification Manager

After applications for field inspection have been processed at the department, growers will receive a letter notifying them of which fields have been accepted. Field information such as legal descriptions and acres will be listed. Please review this information for accuracy and contact NDSSD if any changes need to be made. The letter will also identify your inspector and provide their contact information.

At this time preparations should be made to have fields ready for inspection. Isolations, if needed, must be installed before inspection. Mowing or cultivation, or any other means that provides a five foot border separating inseparable crops is acceptable. See Figure 1. No isolations are needed when small grains are seeded against flax, corn, soybeans, edible beans, or where grass strips or roads are the borders. The field will not pass if the required isolation is not in place.

Take the time to scout fields for potential problems such as prohibited noxious weeds, or contamination of other crops. The field inspector should not be your primary quality control person. Scouting fields can save a lot of time and potentially salvage a field by making corrections. Rouging or additional isolation may be needed to correct a problem in a field and these actions may delay harvest. Remember, if rouging is necessary be sure to remove the plants from the field completely.

Once fields are inspected, and reports are received, take time to review the information. Fields may have partial rejections because of contaminations or be totally rejected because it does not meet varietal descriptions. Watch for tall orange flags in the field, these are areas that have problems that need to be avoided or corrective action is needed to rogue or cut out prohibited weeds, or other crop contaminations. Typical problem areas for field bindweed are along road ditches, perimeters of field, tree rows, or rock piles.

Most of all do not assume that the fields have been inspected before harvesting. We cannot salvage fields if harvested before inspection. Call your inspector or the NDSSD office if you are unsure if the inspection is completed.



Figure 1. Isolation strip separating two wheat varieties.

Potatoes in the Spring of 2009 in North Dakota

Willem Schrage, Potato Program Director

While writing this article there is still much water in the Red River and tributaries. I have not met anybody who remembers the Red River staying this high and fields being flooded this long. Potato planting has been going on in areas farthest away from the rivers. However, much land is still wet or even under water closer to the rivers. Planting in the Red River Valley is expected to be late. A few weeks of dry weather changes the outlook, however.

Not only the season, but also the market outlook for all fresh and processing potatoes reflects directly on seed potato growers. A lower demand for French fries means that seed of an early processing variety such as Shepody does not find as many customers as once expected and contracted, because the processors will use old stock longer. The absence of a processing contract means that processing growers are waiting till they know more, before taking their seed potatoes.

Changes in demand from the processors changed the destination of some seed. Red potatoes that stay red during the winter are in high demand. We need to fine tune the system to keep enough seed within virus tolerance in order for enough seed to be available. There are several varieties such as Red LaSoda and Norland that are popular because of their color and taste. There is no nicer color than Dakota Rose, as long as you can keep the skin undamaged. Sangre, however, is still the one variety that stores well and keeps its color the longest. Other new varieties, such as Red Pearl and Calred, haven't proven yet whether they perform better.

In general, seed potatoes have been moving rather well during this spring. Because the marketing season in general has been satisfactory, the biggest challenge for many growers in many areas this year will be to keep the supply in line with the demand. One cannot out-produce overproduction although some seem to try. A higher yield per acre will only result in higher revenue if the acreage is smaller or the demand increases. We do not know when the economy will turn around and the demand for processed potatoes will rise again. It is a bit early to predict.



North Dakota State
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Seed Department

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 reports due
- Sept. 15...** Research fees due
- Oct. 1** Unconditioned carry-over seed report due
- Oct. 1** License applications due for Approved Conditioners
- Oct. 1** 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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Wet Fields Cause Problems Well After Seeding

Some growers may have had fields with wet areas that went unplanted initially. If these areas were planted later when they dried out, make sure we know about it to prevent certain problems.

Make sure your inspector knows there are areas that were planted later. Indicate the areas that are planted late on your field maps and include planting dates. Maturity differences will be evident, which could cause the inspector to think there are different varieties in the field resulting in a failed field inspection.

Hopefully you put as much thought and care into planting those areas as you did the first time. Hopefully, the planter was clean and filled with the same crop/variety/class as was planted in the main part of the field. If not, you may be headed for problems.



Summer Reporting Requirements

Annual Report of Seed Sold due July 31

According to Chapter 4-09 of North Dakota Century Code, a Seed Labeling Permit is required by anyone (individual or company) who labels seed in North Dakota. This includes not only agricultural seed, but flower, vegetable, tree and shrub seed as well. This report is due thirty-one days after the reporting period ends, which is June 30. All North Dakota permit holders will receive a report form in late June. Labelers must report the quantity of ALL seed sold during the reporting period (July 1- June 30) and remit the appropriate fee to the Seed Department. **This report includes ALL seed, not just certified seed.** The report must be returned even if there were no sales in the reporting period. If you no longer sell seed, please check the appropriate box on the form to cancel your permit.

Research Fee Report due September 15

Research fees are assessed by the variety owners to generate funding for breeding programs. The ND State Seed Department is responsible for collecting research fees for NDSU, our neighbor states and Busch Agricultural Resources for seed sold in North Dakota. Research Fee Reports for seed produced in 2008 will be mailed to all who completed certification and labeled seed during the last year and sold before June 30, 2009. **Labelers** are required to report the quantity of seed **SOLD AS SEED** and remit payment to the Seed Department. **Please make sure you return the report and payment to the Seed Department on time.** DO NOT remit payment to your county extension agent or local/state crop improvement association. All reports must be returned to the Seed Department in order for your account to be reconciled.

Unconditioned Carryover Seed Report due October 1

Report forms are mailed to seed producers in late July and are due October 1. Key information includes variety, class, field application number and the number of bushels of unconditioned seed remaining. **Unconditioned Carryover Seed Reports must be submitted in order for that seed to be eligible for final certification in 2009-10.** Failure to report carryover seed will disqualify that seed for final certification. To assist you in marketing that product, unconditioned carryover seed is listed in the Seed Directory if reported on time. Carryover certified seed does not need to be reported, however, a new sample must be submitted to the department for a new germination test to ensure it meets labeling requirements.

Summer Potato Virus Test Reminder

In July, the Diagnostic Lab will conduct the annual summer potato virus test. This testing service is provided to growers on a voluntary basis for anyone interested in submitting leaflet samples for PVX and PVY testing. Growers need to be aware that there is currently one testing requirement for certification. PVY tests are required on all latent virus carrier varieties including Russet Norkotah, Shepody, and Silverton. Contact the Potato Certification program if you have questions regarding varieties that must be tested for PVY.

All tests are conducted using an ELISA test and 400 leaflet samples. Growers should submit at least 440 leaflets for these tests in order to ensure the proper sample size is tested. Bt-Cry3a tests will also be available at the same time for any grower interested in obtaining a GMO test. This test also requires a minimum of 400 leaflets. PVX, PVY, and the GMO test can be performed on the same leaflet sample.

Each grower will receive an information packet in July containing instructions on collecting and submitting samples for testing, sample tags, and a test request form. Use the test request form to indicate whether you will be submitting samples for testing and when you would like to test. To ensure proper sample identification, the sample tags must be returned with the samples. Please contact the department if you have any questions on sampling and testing.

Regulatory Update

Joe Magnusson, Seed Regulatory Manager

We have sampled and tested approximately 1,500 samples for truth in labeling testing. Stop Sale orders were issued on 67 seed lots that were improperly labeled or found to be out of tolerance with label claims. The majority of these violations have been from out of date labels and inert matter (broken seed) in excess of tolerance. We also found 14 certified seed lots that did not meet certification standards. These lots appear to have been contaminated in bins and handling equipment that were not thoroughly cleaned.

Any person selling seed in North Dakota must first obtain a permit to sell seed in this state. As of May 5, we have 92 certified seed growers who have labeled seed and do not have a permit. A permit will be sent to these growers the end of May or the first week in June and we are requesting they send it back as soon as it is received.

We have a number of permit holders that have not returned their 2007-2008 annual reporting form for seed sales. Even if no sales were made in the reporting period, the form must be returned to our department. If the form for the 2007-2008 seed sales season is not returned by June 30, a fine may be assessed and your permit may be cancelled. If you do not return your reporting form or your permit is cancelled, you will not be able to certify and sell seed in North Dakota.

The annual reporting form for seed sales will be mailed to all permit holders the end of June. The form and any fees due must be sent back to the department within 31 days or late fees will be administered. If you wish to cancel your permit, check the appropriate box at the top of the form and return within 31 days.

Goehring Named Agriculture Commissioner

Doug Goehring was appointed ND Agriculture Commissioner by Governor John Hoeven April 6 to fill the vacancy created by Roger Johnson's resignation. Johnson left after he was elected president of the National Farmers Union this spring. Goehring will fill out the remainder of Johnson's term, which ends November 2010.

Goehring operates a 2,000 acre no-till operation currently raising corn, soybeans, spring wheat, field peas, canola, winter wheat and alfalfa. His professional affiliations have included the ND Soybean Council and Associations, ND Grain Growers Association, ND Stockmen's Association and ND Farm Bureau board of directors, among other state and national agriculture and agribusiness groups.

With his appointment as agriculture commissioner, Commissioner Goehring becomes the statutory chairman of the State Seed Commission. Goehring announced on May 7, 2009 that Bob Christman has agreed to serve in the role of Deputy Agriculture Commissioner. Christman has experience in a broad range of agricultural roles including state ASCS Director, Director of NDSU Extension Service and the past 12 years as Deputy Tax Commissioner.

Seed Commissioner Ken Bertsch commented, "I've known both gentlemen since the early 90's, and know that both take agriculture and public service seriously. Whatever the final decision regarding the seed commission chairmanship, either Doug or Bob will pay close attention to the well-being of the seed industry. I look forward to visiting with them about the various programs and services of the Seed Department, and the role of the Commission in the leadership of the Seed Department".

Brandt Retires



Sharon Brandt will retire from the State Seed Laboratory June 8 after 23 years of service. Sharon became a permanent employee in 1987 after working here as

a seasonal employee for a few years. She attained Certified Seed Analyst standing in purity and germination in 1991. She has been the lead purity analyst since then and assisted with germination testing when needed. In the summers, she inspected certified seed fields. Her knowledge and experience will be greatly missed. We all wish Sharon and her husband Lyle a long and happy retirement.



NDSU Foundation Seedstocks Names New Assistant Director



Dr. Gonzalo Rojas-Cifuentes joined the NDSU Foundation Seedstocks Project as assistant director February 2, 2009.

Gonzalo is a native of Chile, where he received his Bachelors degree in Agronomy from the University of Chile, Santiago. He obtained his Masters and PhD from NDSU. After finishing his PhD, Gonzalo was employed as a research associate in the dry bean project at NDSU. He has extensive experience in the seed industry with seed genetics and production. His background in plant breeding and seed production, along with his in-depth understanding of statistics, experimental design and computer hardware and software will provide Foundation Seedstocks with greater resources to support the seed and commodity producers of North Dakota.

Understanding the Cause of Failures Can Improve Quality

Steve Sebesta, Deputy Commissioner

Most years approximately 95% of all fields inspected by the State Seed Department pass the field inspection. But as you know, field inspection is only the first step in the certification process. Just as critical is the analysis of seed lots and proper grading to determine whether the seed merits the certified seed label. But have you ever stopped to consider the reasons certified seed lots fail to make grade after passing field inspection? An analysis of this year's results may help seed growers and conditioners understand where the primary problems lie. Besides helping growers and conditioners, our department will also use this data to help train field inspectors before the season begins.

As of this date, the department has certified approximately 6.6 million bushels of seed, which is about a million bushels less than last year. Considering the weather we had statewide this winter and spring, it's a respectable number. Even so, examination of seed lots that failed lab analysis reveals another 350,000 bushels of seed that had the potential for certification. Further examination showed that labelers requested 1,717 bulk certificates for those lots. Put another way, that equates to 1,717 missed sales opportunities!

Easily the number one cause a seed lot fails final certification is for "other crop" seed, which accounts for 29% of all rejections. Fields rarely fail inspection due to other crops so this contaminant must be a result of improper handling. Primary sources include harvest equipment such as combines, grain carts, augers, or bins. All of these need to be cleaned before harvest to ensure purity. Other sources of contamination may occur during the conditioning process from dirty cleaners, conveyance equipment or bins. The number one source of contamination our Regulatory staff encounters during spring sampling is from dirty bins. Why go through all the effort to certify seed and then dump it into a dirty bin? Several years ago, we made the requirement that all hopper bins be equipped with lower access doors to facilitate bin cleaning. Still, some people just don't bother and the result is a Stop Sale Order on the seed lot.

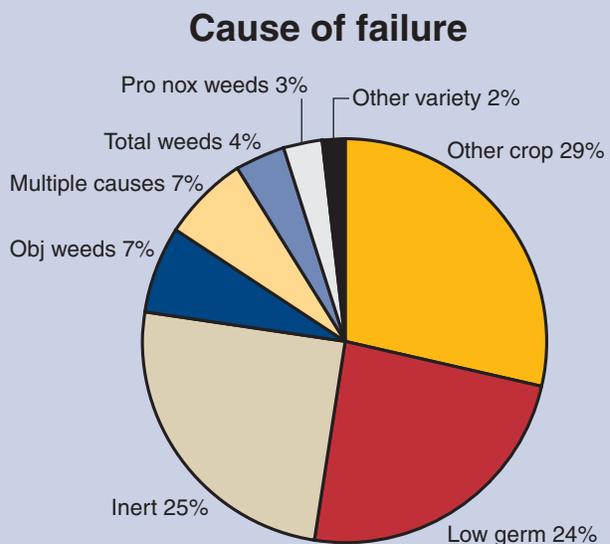
The next leading cause of failure is due to inert matter. While the source of this may be due to field conditions (weeds, overly dry seed, rough harvest), inert matter can usually be removed during conditioning. Most of the lots that failed did not fail by great amounts. Considering the maximum allowable inert is

1%, anything more than that level still fails. We saw a lot of samples that contained broken kernels.

The third leading cause is low germination. Many factors can affect germination percentage such as crop maturity and handling. About a third of the samples that failed to meet germination standards were fragile crops like soybeans, dry beans and field peas. These crops must be handled carefully during harvest and any time the seed is handled to avoid damage. We also suspect that the improper use of glyphosate as a pre-harvest desiccant contributes to low germinations and we have begun to track these samples to determine the extent of the problem.

All weed seed problems together (including prohibited noxious, objectionable weeds and total weeds) combined for 14 % of rejections. Only 3% of all seed lots rejected were due to prohibited noxious weeds, and all of those were due to field bindweed. This weed needs to be controlled in seed fields and the low level indicates that growers do a good job controlling that problem.

Progressive farmers are willing to pay a premium for certified seed because they understand the benefits of quality inputs. The main lesson to be learned by these figures is that the production of certified seed requires commitment to quality by all involved, seed growers, conditioners, retailers, as well as field inspectors and lab analysts. Attention to detail and willingness to make the right decisions will help improve product quality.



North Dakota State Seed Department

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Non-Profit Organization
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NDSSD Calendar

NDSU Field Days Scheduled

Field days are an excellent way to keep in touch with important issues in production agriculture. They provide participants the opportunity to observe and learn about the attributes of different varieties of crops and learn what NDSU researchers are doing to improve agriculture. The research stations also play a critical role in the seed industry because most of the Foundation seed for NDSU varieties is produced at the research/extension centers.

- June 24** Central Grasslands REC, Streeter
- July 7** Hettinger REC
- July 8** Dickinson REC
- July 9** Williston REC
- July 13** Agronomy Seed Farm, Casselton
- July 14** Carrington REC
- July 15** North Central REC, Minot
- July 16** Langdon REC