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Seed certification

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Quick Facts

Certified seed is high quality seed which has met strict standards for germination, genetic purity and freedom from weeds and diseases.

Certified seed is produced under the direction of the Colorado Seed Certification Service, which is a cooperative effort between the Colorado Seed Growers Association and Colorado State University Extension Service.

The use of certified seed helps prevent the spread of weeds and diseases and helps produce more uniform stands.

All information concerning seed certification is available from the Colorado Seed Growers Association on the CSU campus.

certification service. This direction insures continued maintenance of varietal purity and seed quality. Registered seed is used for the production of certified seed.

Certified seed is the progeny of foundation or registered seed. It must be processed in a manner which will maintain genetic identity and purity, and it must be approved and certified by a recognized seed certification agency.

Production of Certified and Registered Seed

1. Seed growers must obtain foundation seed to produce registered (or certified) seed or they must obtain registered seed to produce certified seed. Certified seed also may be produced directly from foundation seed.

2. The seed must be planted in clean fields, which were not planted to the same crop the previous year unless that crop was a certified class of seed of the same variety. Some crops, such as alfalfa and grasses, require longer than a year between crops.

3. The fields must be kept as weed-free as possible and all noxious weeds should be eliminated. A list of noxious weeds is included in the Official Handbook of Seed Certification for Colorado.

4. Growers should apply for field inspection through their local CSU county extension offices.

5. Fields are inspected for varietal purity, freedom from weeds and disease and other factors (preferably no more than two weeks before harvest). Growers should contact their local CSU extension agent when fields are ready.

6. If fields pass inspection, the seed may be harvested, but very careful attention should be given to cleaning the harvesting equipment, trucks and storage facilities to help maintain purity. Seed that is to be certified should not be mixed with non-certified seed or seed of another variety.

7. It is recommended that a *representative bin run* sample be taken from each bin and sent to the Colorado Seed Growers Association office for germination and purity analysis immediately after harvest to detect problems with the seed and to speed issuance of tags or labels at seed sales time.

8. Seed should be cleaned by the seed growers with their own equipment or by processors approved by the Certification Service.

9. A *representative cleaned* sample should then be sent to the Colorado Seed Growers Association office for analysis. Approval or disapproval for certification

The seed certification program was established to improve the quality of seed available to the farming community. Seed certification provides a means of establishing and maintaining the genetic and mechanical purity of a variety. Certification also sets high standards for germination and for freedom from disease. The strict standards mean that the spread of weeds and disease through the seed is kept at a minimum.

Planting certified seed gives farmers greater assurance of good stands and clean fields because they know the quality of the seed; i.e., they know it has a high germination percentage and is essentially free from weeds and disease. Certified seed also has been cleaned properly and is much more uniform in grade and type than is common seed.

Varietal purity is assured through an inspection and record keeping system and is maintained through strict adherence to a seed class system. The classes of seed are listed below.

Breeder seed is seed or vegetative propagating material controlled by the plant breeder who developed the variety, or in some cases by a sponsoring plant breeder, institution or firm. Breeder seed is the source for foundation seed and has high genetic purity.

Foundation seed is produced from breeder seed and maintains the genetic purity established in the breeder seed. Foundation seed is produced by or under the control of agricultural experiment stations or by the variety's originator. It is the source of registered and/or certified seed.

Registered seed is produced from foundation seed by seed growers under the direction of the state seed

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<p>Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Lowell Watts, Director of Extension Service, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523. By law and purpose, the CSU Cooperative Extension Service is dedicated to serve all people on an equal and nondiscriminatory basis.</p>	<p>To simplify technical terminology, trade names of products and equipment occasionally will be used. No endorsement of products named is intended nor is criticism implied of products not mentioned.</p>
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is based on this sample. The regulations provide that the sample must represent the entire lot to be sold. A grower should not clean a sample for analysis and attempt to sell the remainder of the lot uncleaned; stop-sales, law suits and other problems have occurred when this has been done.

10. Once the seed lot has been approved for certification, labels or tags may be requested from the Colorado Seed Growers Association office at cost, or the seed may be sold in bulk by the grower. Bulk sales books are available upon request.

11. Bulk sales must be reported to the Colorado Seed Growers Association office. A minimal certification fee is charged on bulk sales to maintain the Certification Service.

Obtaining Seed

Foundation seed may be obtained by contacting the Foundation Seed Project, Agronomy Department, Colorado State University (phone: 491-6502), or the Colorado Seed Growers Association office at CSU (phone: 491-6202).

Registered and certified seed may be obtained by contacting one of the growers listed in the Colorado Seed Directory, one of the approved processors listed in

the Seed Directory, or the Colorado Seed Growers Association office. Registered and certified seed prices are set by the growers and processors—not by the Seed Growers Association office.

Marketing Certified Seed

Usually the best way to market seed is through an approved processor. Processors sometimes will contract with growers to grow certified seed. It is advisable to check with a processor prior to planting to assure a market for your seed.

A Seed Directory which lists all certified seed growers and the seed they produced is published semi-annually by the Colorado Seed Growers Association.

Obtaining Information on Certification

Certification handbooks, seed directories, field inspection application blanks, variety brochures, other types of information and answers to questions are available through the Colorado Seed Growers Association office, C-3 Plant Sciences Building, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colo. 80523 (phone: 491-6202).