

Seed Programs FAQs Frequently asked Questions

How long is a germination test date valid? The germination test date is valid for a nine-month period, excluding the month in which it was tested. Cool season lawn and turf grasses are valid for 15 months, not including month of test. A "Sell By MM/YY" is required for these grasses. It can vary by crop kind. See Seed Act and Regulations for specific requirements.

What are the "Prohibited Noxious Weed Seeds" and is there a tolerance applied if one is found in a sample? The Prohibited Noxious weed seeds are:

Bindweed, Field (Convolvulus arvensis)
Bindweed, Hedge (Calystegia sepium)
Quackgrass (Elymus repens)
Canada Thistle (Cirsium arvense)
Multiflora Rose (Rose multiflora)
Johnsongrass (Sorghum halepense), its crosses with other grasses and other grasses which produce seed which are not readily distinguishable from Johnsongrass.
Shattercane (Sorghum bicolor ssp. Arundinaceum)
Marijuana (Cannabis sativa)
Mile-a-minute (Persicaria perfoliata)
Kudzu-vine (Pueraria lobata)

*****There is no tolerance on prohibited noxious weed seeds.*****

What is the maximum weed seed percentage allowed? One percent by weight is the allowed limit.

What is the maximum Inert Matter percentage allowed? Ten percent by weight is the allowed limit. (the exception being that Kentucky Bluegrass, labeled without a variety name, is permitted to have up to 15% Inert Matter by weight)

Do all seed treatments need to be labeled? Yes, all treated seed, no matter what kind of treatment, must be properly labeled.

Who is responsible for proper labeling? The person or dealer upon whose premises seeds are located and are exposed or offered for sale is responsible to ensure that the Seed Label is in compliance. If the label is not in compliance, the person or dealer needs to obtain a corrected label before offering the seed for sale.

Do "Cover crop" seeds need to be labeled? Yes. All seeds being exposed or offered for sale must be properly tested and labeled.

What are "Undesirable Grass Seeds"? These are seed kinds when found in lawn and turf seed are noxious weeds and must be labeled accordingly. See "Seed Testing, Labeling and Standards (Regulations)" link on the Seed Program webpage under the "Legal Library" section or contact the Seed Laboratory at (717) 787-4894.

Must I be licensed to sell seed in Pennsylvania? Yes, all seed distributors whose name and address appear on the seed label or container must be licensed.

Seed Certification FAQs

What is the purpose of certified seed?

The purpose of seed certification is to maintain and make available to the public, sources of high quality seeds and propagating materials of varieties grown and distributed as to insure genetic identity.

What are the classes of seed certification?

They are Breeder, Foundation, Registered and Certified classes.

What is the deadline for filing applications?

For most crops being certified, the filing deadline is between May 1 and June 15.

Are there fees involved for participating in the certification program?

Yes, fees are listed on the application form. The Application form is available on the Seed Program Webpage under the "Forms" section.

Seed Laboratory FAQs

How long will it take to get a germination test completed?

Each seed kind has its own particular conditions for germination. The length of the test can vary from as little as six days to 28 days and some seeds even longer. Some of the most common test periods are:

- Small grains 7-10 days*
- Clovers, Alfalfa 7 days*
- Corn 7 days*
- Soybeans, Beans 8 days*
- Tall Fescue/Ryegrass 14 days*
- Fine Fescues 21 days*
- Kentucky Bluegrass 21 days*

What kinds of tests are necessary to be able to sell my seed in PA?

The noxious weed exam, purity exam and germination test.

How much seed do I need to send for testing?

- Two ounces of grasses, such as Kentucky bluegrass, bentgrass, and seeds of similar kinds.*
- Five ounces of ryegrass, fescues, grass mixtures, and small seeded legumes.*
- Two pounds of small grains, corn and sorghum*
- At least 1000 seeds of any kind for a germination test.*

How do I pay for seed testing fees?

Invoicing is the preferred way to bill/pay for testing fees. The invoices are sent at the beginning of each month. Please, make checks payable to the "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania".

How long are seeds viable?

Under ideal conditions, many years. When stored under normal conditions, between two and four years.

Where can I get a copy of the Seed Act and Regulations?

Go to the "Seed Act" and the "Seed Testing, Labeling and Standards (Regulations)" links on the Seed Program webpage under the "Legal Library" section or contact the Seed Laboratory at (717) 787-4894.