



General Seed Certification Standards

These standards are applicable to all crops eligible for certification, and with the standards for the individual crops, shall constitute the Certification Standards of the **Southern Seed Certification Association, Inc.**

I. TYPE OF CERTIFYING ORGANIZATION

The Southern Seed Certification Association, Inc. (hereafter called the Association or the SSCA) is a non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Alabama. It is designated as an official seed-certifying agency pursuant to Alabama and Florida laws and is a member of the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA). SSCA's seed certifying activities meet or exceed the standards and procedures specified in part 201.68 through 201.78 of the Federal Seed Act (7 U. S. C. 1561 (a) (24).

SSCA carries neither products liability nor errors and omission insurance covering certification activities. It is not a marketing agency and it makes no representations or warranties of any kind, expressed or implied, including merchantability or fitness for purpose, or otherwise. Under no circumstances or event shall SSCA be responsible for incidental or consequential damages. Issuance of certification tags is based on a presumption of accuracy of information provided to the agency and on conclusions reached by competent personnel employing accepted procedures of field and conditioning plant inspections and seed analysis. Certification is limited to seed of officially recognized varieties that are grown and inspected so as to maintain varietal identity and genetic purity.

SSCA endeavors to maintain a close working relationship with seed growers, seed conditioners, seed developers and merchants, agricultural commodity and professional groups, agricultural research and extension organizations and state and federal seed regulatory agencies.

II. PURPOSE OF CERTIFICATION

The purpose shall be to maintain and make available to the public through certification, high quality seeds and propagating materials of superior crop plant varieties so grown and distributed as to maintain genetic identity and purity. The word "seed" or "seeds" as used in these standards shall be understood to include all propagating materials.

III. MEMBERSHIP

Any person, partnership or corporation involved in the production, conditioning distribution or consumption of Certified seed may become an active member of SSCA by agreeing to follow its rules, regulations, and procedures as adopted by the Board of Directors and by payment of the annual membership fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00). Any other person, partnership or corporation who is interested in supporting the work of the Association may become an associate member upon payment of the annual membership fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00). The membership year shall be from January 1 through December 31.

IV. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

A variety shall be eligible for certification if it has been approved as meriting certification by a member agency of the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies, an appropriate National Variety Review Board, a public Agricultural Experiment Station, or the Certification Committee of this Association.

Before a new variety will be considered for certification, the originator, developer, owner or agent of such variety must request certification and must provide the following information:

- A. The name of the variety. This name must be the established name if the variety has previously been marketed.
- B. A statement concerning the variety's origin and the breeding procedure used in its development.
- C. A detailed description of the morphological, physiological, and other characteristics of the plants and seed that distinguish it from other varieties.
- D. Evidence of performance of the variety, such as comparative yield data, insect and disease resistance, or other factors supporting the identity of the variety.
- E. A statement delineating the geographic area or areas of adaptation of the variety.
- F. A statement of the plans and procedures for the maintenance of stock seed classes including the number of generations through which the variety may be multiplied.
- G. A description of the manner in which the variety is constituted when a particular cycle of reproduction or multiplication is specified.
- H. Any additional restrictions on the variety, specified by the breeder, with respect to geographic area of seed production, age of stand or other factors affecting genetic purity.
- I. A sample of seed representative of the variety as marketed. The sample size shall be that required for a submitted sample in the current issue of the Rules of Testing Seeds for the Association of Official Seed Analysts.

V. CLASSES AND SOURCES OF CERTIFIED SEED

The following four classes of seed shall be recognized in seed certification.

- A. **Breeder Seed (White Tag)** - Breeder seed shall be seed directly controlled by the originating or sponsoring plant breeding institution or person or designee thereof, and is the source for production of seed of the other classes of certified seed.
- B. **Foundation Seed (White Tag)** - Foundation seed shall be the progeny of Breeder or Foundation seed produced under control of the originator or sponsoring plant breeding institution, or person, or designee thereof. Foundation seed is a class of certified seed, which is produced under procedures established by the Association for the purpose of maintaining genetic purity and identity.
- C. **Registered Seed (Purple Tag)** - Registered seed shall be the progeny of Breeder or Foundation seed handled under procedures acceptable to the Association to maintain satisfactory genetic purity and identity.
- D. **Certified Seed (Blue Tag)** - Certified seed shall be the progeny of Breeder, Foundation or Registered seed so handled as to maintain satisfactory genetic identity and purity and which has been acceptable to the Association, except as provided in VI.

VI. LIMITATIONS OF GENERATIONS

The number of generations through which a variety may be multiplied shall be limited to that specified by the originating breeder or owner of the variety, but shall not exceed two generations beyond the Foundation seed class, with the following exceptions:

- A. Recertification of the Certified class may be permitted when no Foundation seed is being maintained.
- B. The production of an additional generation of the Certified class may be permitted on a one-year basis only, when an emergency is declared by the Association stating that the Foundation and Registered seed supplies are not adequate to plant the needed certified acreage of the variety. The permission of the originating or sponsoring plant breeder, institution, firm or owner of the variety, if existent, must be obtained. The additional generation of Certified seed to meet the emergency need is ineligible for recertification.

VII. ESTABLISHING THE SOURCE OF SEED

The items must be provided with an application for certification to establish the source, class and quantity of seed used to plant each crop to be considered for certification. One item may be an invoice showing crop, variety, class, lot number and quantity of seed purchased. The other preferred item is a certification tag from each lot representing the seed planted. If either the invoice or tag is not available, a signed statement providing the necessary information will be accepted. In cases where growers plant eligible seed from their own production, a tag or a copy of the laboratory report must be submitted. In all cases, the applicant's signature on the application for certification shall serve as an affidavit that the information submitted for verification of seed eligibility represents the total amount of seed used.

VIII. PRODUCTION OF SEED

A. Field Inspection

One or more field inspections shall be made prior to the time a seed crop of any certified class is to be harvested and at such other time or times when genetic purity and identity, or any other factor affecting seed certification, can best be determined. The field shall be in such condition to permit an adequate inspection to determine genetic purity and identity.

It is the responsibility of the producer to make requests for all inspections required by the Association. All requests must be made on official application forms. Inspection fees must accompany the application; otherwise, the request shall not be considered as having been received.

B. Unit of Certification

The unit of certification shall be a clearly defined area, which may be divided subject to special regulations for specific crops.

C. Application for Field Inspection

forms for filing applications for field inspection will be furnished by the Association.

D. Dates for filing applications

1. Bahiagrass, Clovers, Fescue, Ryegrass, Small Grains, and Vetch - April 1
2. Peanuts and Cowpeas - June 15
3. Cotton, Sorghum, and Lespedeza - July 1
4. Soybeans, Millets, and Sweet Potatoes - August 1
5. Bermuda grasses, and Turfgrass - a. New fields - 30 days prior to planting
b. Established fields - 30 days prior to lifting

6. Hybrid Corn - 10 days after planting.

E. Late Applications

All applications for inspection must be in by deadline dates. Exceptions to this requirement may be made at the discretion of the Association, but in all such cases the applicant will be required to pay the regular application fee plus a late application fee. In addition to these charges, travel expenses will be charged if an inspector must return to an area where inspection has been completed.

F. Enclosures to be submitted with application

1. Copy of purchase invoice or other acceptable evidence showing crop, variety, class, source, lot number and quantity of planting seed.
2. Certification tag from each lot of seed planted.
3. If tag or invoice is not available, a signed statement showing crop, variety, source, class, lot number and quantity of planting seed.
4. Annual membership fee of \$50.00, if not previously submitted.
5. Inspection fees as printed on application form.

G. Refunds on Field Inspection Fees

Applications may be withdrawn prior to inspection, and in such cases, a refund will be made, provided the Association receives such notice in time to notify the inspector prior to the visit to the grower's farm.

H. Contamination Crops and Weeds

Every field for which certification is requested shall show evidence of good management and shall show that reasonable precaution has been taken to control contaminating crops and varieties and objectionable weeds, the seeds of which are indistinguishable or inseparable, with available conditioning equipment, from seed of the particular crop being inspected.

I. Handling of Crop Prior to Inspection

roguing of off-type plants, objectionable crop plants and weeds is required prior to field inspection.

J. Storage and Storage Inspection

Inspection of harvested lots of seed from approved fields may be made at any time by representatives of the Association, who shall have authority to reject for certification any lot not properly protected from mixture, or which is not properly identified.

K. Qualifications for Inspectors

Inspection work requiring technical training shall be performed only by trained personnel.

IX. SEED CONDITIONING

All certified seed must be conditioned in an approved seed plant. The plant must be inspected, and equipment and operational procedures approved prior to conditioning seed. Application forms will be furnished by the Association on request.

A. Approval and Responsibilities of Conditioners - Approval is contingent on the following:

1. Facilities and equipment shall be available to condition seed without introducing admixtures.
2. Identity of the seed must be maintained at all times.
3. Records of all operations shall be complete and adequate to account for all incoming seed and final disposition of seed.
4. Conditioners shall permit the Association to inspect all records of the kind of seed conditioned, including both certified and non-certified seed.
5. Approval of conditioners shall be on an annual basis. An SSCA inspector shall make one or more unannounced inspections of each plant annually.
6. Approved conditioners shall designate an individual who shall be responsible to and approved as an SSCA representative for performing such duties as may be required including the following:
 - a. Maintaining varietal purity and quality of seed.
 - b. Cleaning seed storage, handling and conditioning equipment when changing varieties.
 - c. Keeping records.
 - d. Keeping seed identified at all times.
 - e. Pulling sample for certification.
 - f. Ordering certification tags.
 - g. Attaching tags to the bags.
 - h. Preventing seed from being shipped until laboratory reports have been received in the SSCA office approving seed for certification.
 - i. Preventing non-certified seed from being placed in SSCA emblemed bags.
 - j. Submitting reports as required.

B. Blending - Seed lots of the same variety and class may be blended and the class retained. If lots of different classes are blended, the lowest class shall be applied to the resultant blend. Such blending can only be done when authorized by the Association.

X. SAMPLING SEED

A. Sampling Procedure - A representative sample of each lot of seed or propagating material shall be obtained by the Association or by a designated agent of the Association.

1. In order to secure a representative sample, equal portions shall be taken from evenly distributed parts of the quantity of seed to be sampled.
2. If seed is sampled during conditioning, the most representative sample can be obtained with an automatic sampling device in the flow of conditioned seed or by taking a small portion of seed by hand from the top of each bag before it is closed.

3. If seed is sampled after conditioning and closing of bags, a probe or trier long enough to sample all portions should be used for free flowing seed. Non-free flowing such as certain grasses and other seed difficult to sample with probe or trier shall be sampled by thrusting the hand into the bag and withdrawing representative portions.

When sampling closed bags in quantities of one to six bags, sample each bag and take a total of at least five cores or handfuls. For lots of more than six bags, sample five bags plus at least 10% of the number of bags in the lot. Regardless of lot size, it is not necessary to sample more than thirty bags.

4. If seed is sampled after conditioning and is to remain in bulk it shall be sampled by inserting a long probe or thrusting the hand into the bulk to obtain at least as many samples as if the quantity of seed were in bags of an ordinary size. The samples should be taken from well-distributed points throughout the bulk. Sufficient seed must be obtained from the bulk conditioned seed to provide the same number of samples required from the seed as if it were being bagged.

B. Re-sampling of Seed - When a lot of seed has been rejected because of noxious weed seed or excessive inert material, another sample may be drawn for analysis provided the lot of seed has been recleaned.

C. Forwarding samples - Before mailing or sending the containers of samples they should be properly identified and packaged so as to prevent mechanical damage.

D. Rejection of seed - Evidence that any lot of seed has not been protected from contamination which might affect genetic purity, or is not properly distributed, shall be cause for possible rejection of certification.

XI. LOT AND SAMPLE SIZES

The maximum quantity of seed permitted per lot and size of sample required for a purity and germination test is as follows:

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Lot size maximum pounds</u>	<u>Sample size</u>
Clovers	50,000	8 oz.
Cowpeas	50,000	2 lb.
Corn	50,000	2 lb.
Cotton	50,000	2 lb.
Fescue	50,000	6 oz.
Lespedeza	50,000	6 oz.
Peanuts	50,000	2 lb.
Small Grain		
Barley	48,000	2 lb.
Oats	64,000	2 lb.
Rye	56,000	2 lb.
Wheat	60,000	2 lb.
Triticale	48,000	2 lb.
Soybeans	60,000	2 lb.
Vetch	50,000	2 lb.

XII. SEED ANALYSES

A complete laboratory analysis including crop, variety, class of seed, and producer's name shall be required for each lot of seed before certification is completed. Official recognition will be given to laboratory reports made by either an official State Seed Laboratory or by a commercial laboratory approved by the Association. Approved seed laboratories shall be supervised by a Registered Seed

Technologist. Analyses and tests of samples of seed, and definition of analytical terms, shall be in accordance with the Rules of the Association of Official Seed Analysts.

XIII. SEED TREATMENTS

It is desirable but generally not a requirement, that all seed planted for certification purposes that are normally treated be properly treated to control seed and soil borne organisms.

NOTE: All treated seed must be labeled according to State and Federal Law.

XIV. SEED-BORNE DISEASES

Every field for which certification is requested shall show evidence that reasonable precaution has been taken to control seed-borne diseases. The field at times of inspection shall not contain injurious seed-borne diseases to a degree beyond the tolerance allowed by individual crop standards. A representative sample of the finished seed crop may be subjected to laboratory examination for diseases.

XV. BAGS, EMBLEMS, AND TRADEMARKS

All Foundation, Registered and Certified seed offered for sale shall be in new printed bags bearing the Association emblem. The use of the Association emblem by commercial seedsmen whose trademark appears on their bags is optional, however, it is strongly recommended that all certified seed producers use the emblem on their certified seed bags. The official colors of the Association emblem are orange and blue, however, the emblem may be placed on company brand name bags in the same color as that of other printing on the bag.

XVI. TAGS

- A. Certification tags bearing analysis data must be ordered from the Association by the producer or conditioner.
- B. All classes of certified seed when offered for sale shall have an official certification tag or label properly affixed to each container clearly identifying the Association as the certifying agency, the lot number or other identification, the variety name, and the kind and class of seed. The certification tag or label shall be affixed to the container in a manner that prevents removal and reattachment without tampering being obvious. Seed must remain in the possession of the producer/conditioner until properly tagged and the lab report received by the Association. Tags are not to be forwarded to another party for tagging. The certification tag, which is attached to the bag, serves as evidence of the genetic purity and identity of the seed contained therein. The Association shall maintain records of all tags issued.
- C. Producers may order their tags in advance of laboratory analysis provided detailed arrangements for printing, analysis data, shipping and handling these orders are worked out with the Association in advance. Seed must not be offered for sale until analysis reports have been received by the Association. If seed do not meet certification standards for any reason, tags must be returned to the Association office.
- D. Information to be submitted with tag order:
 - 1. When ordering certification tags the producer must submit a laboratory report and state the lot number, the crop, variety and class, the number of tags in the lot, the net weight of each bag and the name and address of the producer. If tags are not used for any reason they must be returned to the Association office.
 - 2. For the analysis data, the producer must state whether the actual laboratory analysis report data or the minimum certification standards data is to be printed on the tags. The producer is on the laboratory report and the tags were printed as ordered.

E. Preprinting Official Seed Labels on Seed Containers

In accordance with AOSCA regulations, the official Southern Seed Certification Association label or an approved AOSCA label may be preprinted on seed containers. Procedures and guidelines for accounting for the use of such containers are available from the SSCA office.

XVII. CHARGES FOR TAGS

The price for certification tags is listed on the application for certification form.

XVIII. LIABILITY

Responsibility for any obligation arising from the sale or shipment of certified seed rests with the producer or subsequent handler making the sale or shipment. It is the responsibility of certified seed producers to fully comply with the provisions of both the Federal and State Seed Laws and rules and regulations of the Association.

XIX. BELOW STANDARD SEED

Any seed lot that meets all SSCA standards, except that it germinates below the minimum standard, but not below the Federal and /or State Seed Law Standards, may be certified provided certification tags are marked "Below Standard for Germination".

XX. RECERTIFICATION OF SEED UNSOLD THE PREVIOUS YEAR

Seed that is carried over from the previous year must be resampled and meet certification requirements for germination and purity before it can be sold as certified seed. When requesting new tags on carryover seed, send in one out-of-date certification tag on each lot for which new tags are needed and a copy of the current laboratory report.

XXI. SALE OF CONDITIONED SEED IN BULK

- A. Conditioned Registered and Certified class of small grain or soybean seed may be sold in bulk by growers who are approved certified seed conditioners.
- B. All field and seed standards applying to bagged seed shall apply to bulk Registered and Certified seed.
- C. Only one sale of bulk Registered or Certified seed is permitted.
- D. Each bin or container of bulk conditioned seed which is ready for sale or which is being transferred to storage for sale must be labeled with a Bulk Registered or Certified Seed Label and Inventory form. The form must be obtained from the Association. One copy is to be attached to the bin or container, one copy is to be maintained by the conditioner in his files and one copy is to be provided the Association.
- E. Each time a sale is made from bulk conditioned seed a copy of the form Bulk Conditioned Seed Sale Certificate for Registered or Certified Seed must be completed, signed and issued to the purchaser to accompany the seed at the time of purchase. One copy must be retained in the conditioner's files and one copy must be mailed to the Association.

- F. Conditioned seed to be sold in bulk must be sampled in accordance with sampling procedure specified in (X).

XXII. DEFINITIONS

Whenever the following terms or similar terms are used therein, they shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

- A. Conditioning** - The term conditioning means cleaning, bagging, treating or any other operation in the handling of seed from harvest until marketing.
- B. Noxious Weeds** - The term noxious weeds shall mean the weeds listed as noxious weeds (prohibited and restricted) in the Alabama and Florida Seed Law, Rules and Regulation, plus any additional weeds listed in the specific standards.
- C. Lot** - The term "seed lot" or "lot of seed" means a definite quantity of seed identified by a lot number or other identification mark, every portion or bag which is uniform for the factors which appear on the label, within permitted tolerance.
- D. Variety** - The term variety (cultivar) denotes an assemblage of cultivated individuals which are distinguished by any characters (morphological, physiological, cytological, chemical or others) significant for the purposes of agriculture, forestry or horticulture and which when reproduced (sexually or asexually) or reconstituted retain their distinguishing features.
- E. Plant Breeder** - Person or organization actively engaged in the breeding and maintenance of varieties of plants.
- F. Off-type** - Off-type means any seed or plant not a part of the variety in that it deviates in one or more characteristics from the variety as described and may include seeds or plants or other varieties; seeds or plants not necessarily any variety; seeds or plants resulting from cross-pollination by other kinds of varieties; seeds or plants resulting from uncontrolled self-pollination during production of hybrid seed, or segregates from any of the above.
- G. Variant** - Variant means any seed or plant which (a) is distinct within the variety but occurs naturally in the variety. (b) is stable and predictable with a degree of reliability comparable to other varieties of the same kind, within recognized tolerances, when the variety is reproduced or reconstituted, and (c) was originally a part of the variety as released. A variant is not an off-type.
- H. Open-Pollination** - Open-pollination seed is seed produced as a result of natural pollination as opposed to hybrid seed produced as a result of controlled pollination.
- I. Field Boundary** - A field boundary shall clearly define the area to be inspected.

XXIII. NOXIOUS WEED LIST

Weed seed designated noxious by the Alabama and Florida Seed Laws, Rules and Regulations:

	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
1.	Annual Bluegrass	<i>Poa annua</i>
2.	Balloonvine	<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i>
3.	Bermudagrass	<i>Cynodon spp.</i>
4.	Blessed thistle	<i>Cnicus benedictus</i>
5.	Bracted plantain	<i>Plantago aristata</i>
6.	Buckhorn plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
7.	Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
8.	Cheat	<i>Bromus secalinus</i>
9.	Chess	<i>Bromus spp.</i>

10.	Cocklebur	<i>Xanthium spp.</i>
11.	Corn cockle	<i>Agrostemma githago</i>
12.	Crotalaria	<i>Crotalaria spp.</i>
13.	Darnel	<i>Lolium temulentum</i>
14.	Docks	<i>Rumex spp. except hastatulus</i>
15.	Dodder	<i>Cuscuta spp.</i>
16.	Field Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
17.	Giant Foxtail	<i>Setaria faberi</i>
18.	Hedge bindweed	<i>Convolvulus sepium</i>
19.	Carolina horsenettle	<i>Solanum carolinense</i>
20.	Johnsongrass	<i>Sorghum halepense and/or S. alnum</i>
21.	*Moonflower or Giant Morningglory	<i>Calonyction muricatum</i>
22.	Nutgrass	<i>Cyperus spp.</i>
23.	Quackgrass	<i>Agropyron repens</i>
24.	Red Rice	<i>Oryza sativa</i>
25.	Radish	<i>Raphanus spp.</i>
26.	Serrated tussock	<i>Nassella trichotoma</i>
27.	Sheep sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>
28.	Sickle pod	<i>Senna tora</i>
29.	Silverleaf nightshade	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>
30.	Texas millet	<i>Panicum texnum</i>
31.	Tropical soda apple	<i>Solanum viarum</i>
32.	Wild mustard or turnip	<i>Brassica spp.</i>
33.	Wild onion or garlic	<i>Allium spp.</i>
34.	Goatgrass	

*Recognized as purple morningglory - *Ipomoea turbinata* - by the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA)

XXIV. INTERAGENCY CERTIFICATION

Interagency Certification is the participation of two or more certifying agencies in performing the services required to certify a lot or lots of seed. Methods and standards employed in each step of Interagency Certification are generally similar to those used when certification is completed by a single agency.

It is recognized that in many cases, especially those involving increases of stock seed classes, detailed arrangements may be made between two agencies for the specific case involved. The following standards and procedures are provided to serve as a basis for uniform operation without prior arrangements between the agencies involved.

A. Varieties Eligible: Only those varieties and classes accepted for certification by a member agency of the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies shall be eligible for Interagency Certification.

B. Application of Standards

1. The standards of the certifying agency issuing the Interagency Certification tags shall be applied, provided these standards meet the minimum AOSCA standards for the kind and variety in question.
2. Land requirements, field inspection procedures and field standards of the certifying agency making the field inspection shall be applied, provided those standards meet the minimum AOSCA standards for the kind and variety in question.
3. In the absence of applicable standards by the agency performing the certification service, the standards of the cooperating agency shall be applied. Such standards should meet the minimum AOSCA standards for the kind and variety in question.

C. Evidence of Seed Eligibility: Seed to be recognized for Interagency Certification shall be received in containers carrying official certification labels or evidence of its eligibility from another certifying agency including the following:

1. Kind, variety and class
2. Amount of seed (pounds or bushels)
3. Inspection or lot number traceable to the previous certifying agency's records.

D. Labels and Tagging: Tags or labels issued for Interagency Certified seed shall be serially numbered, or shall carry a lot number and/or certification identity number and clearly identify the certifying agencies involved, the variety, and the kind and class of seed. The Interagency Certification tag or label must be accompanied by an analysis tag showing analysis data required by law.