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WISCONSIN BANKERS' FARM BULLETIN

Law Governing Seed Inspection in Wisconsin

By

A. L. Stone and Henry Lunz

SEED INSPECTORS, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

KIND OF SEED _____	NAME _____
AMOUNT _____	WHERE GROWN _____
PURITY _____ PER CENT	GERMINATION TEST _____ PER CENT
IMPURITIES:	
1. NAME AND NUMBER OF NOXIOUS WEEDS _____	
2. NAME AND PER CENT OF OTHER SEEDS _____	
3. PER CENT OF INERT MATTER _____	
_____ SEED COMPANY, _____ WIS.	

LOOK FOR THIS LABEL.

To every lot of agricultural seeds, over one pound in weight, which is sold in the state must be attached a label, containing the information given above.

File this bulletin where you can find it

DISTRIBUTED BY

Wisconsin Bankers' Association

W. A. von Berg,
Chairman Agricultural Committee,
Mosinee

George D. Bartlett,
Association Secretary,
Pabst Building, Milwaukee

Law Governing Seed Inspection in Wisconsin

"As ye Sow so Shall ye Reap"

What kind of seed gives best results? The yield of any crop is dependent to a large extent upon the quality of the seed sown. Seeds containing many weeds or of low germination can only produce inferior crops and not only such seed affect the crop the year in which sown, but may infest the fields with the noxious weeds which for years to come will cause serious damage. Here again, an ounce of prevention will be found to be far better than a pound of cure.

What does the law require of the seed dealer? In order that the farmer may obtain good seed and to give him an opportunity to know just what he is buying, the Legislature of 1909 passed a Seed Inspection Law. This law, amended in 1913, provides for the testing and labeling of agricultural seeds. Its provisions make it necessary that every lot of agricultural seed, over one pound in weight, be tested and labeled.

A label must be attached to each container from or in which seed is sold and must contain the following information: 1, name and address of seedsman; 2, kind of seed; 3, percentage of purity; 4, percentage of germination; 5, name of noxious weed seeds¹, if any, present in the lot of seeds; 6, the state² or locality in which the seed was grown.

Are any seeds exempt? Garden seeds, meadow and pasture mixtures containing no noxious weed seeds, and seeds held for feeding purposes or that are sold to be re-cleaned, are exempt under the law.

Who enforces the law? The Legislature gave the enforcement of the law to the Director of the Experiment Station with authority to provide for a seed testing laboratory and for collection of samples on the open market. During the past year over three hundred seed dealers in the state were visited and samples taken of the seeds offered for sale.

The first visit of the inspector was mainly educational. Violations of the law were found in most cases to be due to a misunderstanding of its provisions. In most cases an explanation brought co-operation on the part of the dealer. In two cases, where wilful violation was found, the dealers were prosecuted and convicted.

¹Seed that contains more than one noxious weed seed to one thousand of the agricultural seeds cannot be sold in this state. The weed seeds classed as noxious under the law are Canada thistle, quack grass, clover-dodder, field-dodder, and alfalfa-dodder, wild mustard, Indian mustard, wild oats, corn cockle, ox-eye daisy, snapdragon, buck-horn, and perennial sow thistle.

²This applies to alfalfa, corn, and cereals only.

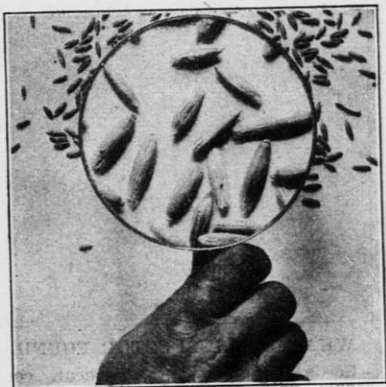
Must farmers have seeds tested and labeled? Many farmers have thought that they were exempt under the law and could sell to their neighbors for seeding purposes without test. This, however, is not the case. A farmer may sell seeds to a dealer or wholesaler without testing them if such seeds are to be stored or recleaned, but when he sells to a farmer for seeding purposes he becomes a dealer and so comes under the provisions of the law.

What is good seed? To insure the purchase of good seed always examine the samples carefully before buying. Good seed should appear even in size, plump and bright in color. Read the label to find dealer's guaranty as to purity, germination, weed seed content, and locality where grown. Select seed that has a high purity and germination test. Shun those containing noxious weeds.

Where are the best seeds grown? All over the United States and Canada, Wisconsin has an enviable reputation as a seed growing state. From every state in the Union there comes a call for Wisconsin grown seed. We have the right climate for seed production and where possible, seeds should be selected that are grown in the locality where they are to be sown. This is especially true of corn and small grains.

Should new varieties be tried out? Certain strains and varieties are especially adapted to Wisconsin conditions. In many cases it has taken years of breeding and selection to develop these varieties. Select standard varieties that have stood the test and that have proven to be adapted to our soils and climate.

Where can reliable seeds be purchased? The question often arises as to where seeds should be purchased. Buy from established, reliable firms. Unless the seed can be personally examined always buy on approval. Insist that the seed be labeled and that the dealer give a reasonable length of time to get seed tested after its arrival, for which ten days is usually sufficient. Beware of traveling agents who promise impossible yields of some high sounding variety of grass or grain. For too often after the agent leaves to return no more the farmer finds himself in



A GOOD START.

This sample of "Grown in Wisconsin" seed oats contained nothing but clean, plump grain. The purpose of only such seed is one of the best forms of crop insurance.

possession of a few bushels of very ordinary seed sold under a fancy name at an exorbitant price, and the bank or a seed company is in possession of a promissory note that he has signed. With few exceptions, the best seeds for the Wisconsin farmer are raised and sold in our own state.

Where can seeds be tested? A seed inspection laboratory is maintained at the Experiment Station for the benefit of farmers and seed dealers. The Federal Government also maintains several seed testing laboratories in different parts of the United States. Many seed houses have private labora-

tories where testing is done. Samples of seed may be sent to any reliable laboratory. In some cases farmers or seed dealers may make their own tests. However, all tests must be substantially equivalent to the test made by our Agricultural Experiment Station on the same lots of seed.

How shall a sample be selected? According to law, samples sent to the Experiment Station must be representative of the lot and should consist of from two to four ounces of seed. Seed is best mixed by pouring the lot out on a tight floor and shoveling over several times, in a manner similar to the way concrete is mixed. Then take a small amount from different portions of the pile, remix, and send the required amount to the laboratory. Mix all seed of the same grade and obtain a representative sample.

How is a purity test made? When the sample reaches the laboratory it is spread out on a white paper and is carefully examined for noxious weed seeds, and if any are found they are counted and the proportion of weed seeds to agricultural seeds is computed. The sample is then thoroughly mixed, a definite amount weighed out and the dirt, sticks, and foreign seeds separated; these are then weighed separately and the percentage computed.

How is germination test made? The only way to determine whether seed will grow or not is to place it under conditions suitable for growth. A certain number of seeds are counted out and placed in dishes between moist



WHAT THE INSPECTOR FOUND.

Seeds of quack grass, cheat, corn cockle, wild oats and wild buckwheat were found in this sample of grain. Each of these weeds, when once well established, would require years to eradicate.

blotters or cloths. These are put away in a germinating chamber and allowed to stay until the good seed has started growth. The germination period varies with the kind of seed, clover taking six days, and some other seeds, such as blue grass, taking twenty-eight days.

Can tests be made at home? The only home tests that the farmer should attempt are germination tests of corn and grains. These can be easily tested by planting a hundred seeds in moist sand or placing between flannel cloths. They must not be allowed to dry out during the test and should be counted on the sixth day. The number growing will be the percentage of germination.

What are the fees for testing? The law fixes a fee of twenty-five cents per sample for tests made at the Experiment Station laboratory. Such fees

should accompany all samples sent for testing. Purity or germination tests made singly will cost fifteen cents each. If seed tested is not to be sold, no fee is necessary but statement to that effect must be sent with the sample. All fees and samples should be sent to the Seed Inspector, Agronomy Building, Madison, Wisconsin. A circular containing the law and literature regarding instructions to seed dealers may also be obtained upon request.