



Iowa Seed News

ISO 9001:2008 Certified

A publication of the Iowa Crop Improvement Association

ICIA Offers Weed Seed Free Forage & Mulch Certification

Holly Ryan

Since Iowa Crop Improvement Association (ICIA) started the certified weed seed free program in 2006 the program has seen exponential growth in the number of acres and participants. I had the chance to talk with one of our weed seed free forage and mulch growers Pat Murken from Story City. Pat says, "That the program is well planned out and it encourages and addresses the need to produce a high quality product. The program also gives farmers a positive image to be viewed as professionals." This program is a voluntary certification program to assure that forage and mulch is free of noxious or undesirable weed seed. The program that is offered complies with the Weed Free Forage Standards developed by the North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA).

The goal of this program is to help Iowa farmers in meeting the growing demand in North America as a preventative program to limit the spread of noxious weeds. Iowa's weed seed free program is an additional marketing opportunity for hay and straw producers. Potential markets include customers seeking clean hay, people needing certified hay for their horses on visits to national parks, and contractors using straw for road construction erosion-control projects. Pat has seen a growing demand for his product since he joined. Pat cannot attribute the success of the farm to himself, "this is a family effort - my wife and youngest son help me out," Pat stated.

The inspection of fields and storage sites within ten days of harvest assures that a designated list of 54 noxious weeds and undesirable plants are not present in a manner to disseminate seed or allow propagation of a new plant. Any noxious weeds or undesirable plants near the field are isolated from the field by at least ten feet. Following harvest, the growers attach certification labels to the bales.



To help connect buyers and sellers, the association has added lists of potential buyers and sellers to their website. A third list offers the growers who currently have certified product for sale. Visit the ICIA website at <http://www.agron.iastate.edu/icia> to view these lists and other information about the program.

Pat has encouraged others to join the program, "We need to continue to expand our market so we can sell more on a national basis. This program has helped me find a niche market and to see that there is a demand out there."

For more information about applying for field inspection or locating a certified forage or mulch producer contact Eileen Wuebker or Kelly Iverson at ICIA (515) 294-6921 or iowacrop@iastate.edu.

Certification Update

Eileen Wuebker

The association staff are wrapping up the field inspection year and hoping that the weather will cooperate in giving our members an opportunity to harvest a quality crop. The weather made for an interesting season but the number of fields not meeting standards this season was very low. We would like to thank our members for their part in making this another successful and safe inspection season.

Approved Conditioner System

– Seed samples have already been arriving at the ISU Seed Laboratory and our staff is ready to assist you with the conditioning, sampling, and labeling of your seed. Several changes to the personnel and training requirements have been made for the 2009 conditioning season.

Agent - Only one agent will be assigned per facility. In facilities where multiple people work with certification we have asked that one person be assigned the primary responsibility. New agents will be trained at an individual training session with the ICIA staff member who works with the crop(s) the facility conditions. An annual proficiency determination will be conducted for each agent and additional training required if an agent is not proficient. Current agents will be evaluated for proficiency and trained as necessary.

Samplers – Personnel designated as samplers will be trained with a training program available on a CD. Each sampler will then be tested to verify their understanding of the sampler requirements. This training will be good for 5 years and will need to be renewed at this time. Initially trained samplers will be grandfathered into the system and will not require retraining. This training module will be available very soon and will be sent to all newly designated samplers.

As a staff we are confident these changes will make the Approved Conditioner system more efficient and allow us to better serve your individual needs. If you have questions regarding this change please contact our office.

Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage & Mulch

– A highlight of our season was an expansion in the acres enrolled for certification in this program. If you have an interest in this program, please refer to the article on page 1 of this newsletter or contact our office to visit more.

Customer Feedback – Your feedback regarding our services continues to be an important tool in the success of our business. Please be sure to call or e-mail our office with any comments you have on improvements we could make and where things are working well. We really do appreciate your input.

ISU Seed Lab Update

Mike Stahr

It is just about time to switch gears from conducting workshops and testing flowers, vegetables, and flowers to testing corn and soybeans (and more!). As I write this update the weather is cool and dry. Elwynn Taylor recently said that this weather doesn't necessarily mean we will have a colder than normal winter, but I am hoping it also means that we won't have an early frost. Corn is about a week behind normal. So far there hasn't been a problem with disease introduced by insects as last winter thinned their ranks. Too much moisture in the form of fog, heavy dews, or rain can be a problem this time of year if there are *Phomopsis pycnidia* on the pods as moisture helps the fungus move to the seed. Please contact us if you have any questions about seed quality, especially dealing with diseases or frost damage.

Through the Seed Lab's involvement with many seed organizations, companies, and other testing labs, we have input in numerous issues concerning seed quality, testing, and movement. I became president of the Association of Official Seed Analysts (AOSA) in June and continue to serve on the Executive Board of the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists (SCST). It was interesting to attend the AOSA/SCST annual meeting as well as annual meetings of ASTA, AOSCA (certification), and AASCO (regulatory). A big topic this summer has been selling seed by count. Traditionally corn has been sold by weight and count (80,000) and there is a move toward selling soybeans by seed count. An issue has risen regarding how much "leeway" is

allowed from the number listed on the bag. The State of Iowa announced last fall (and reconfirmed this summer) that it follows the NIST (National Institute of Standards & Technology) standard which is tighter than what is in section 12 of the AOSA Rules for Testing Seeds (for corn, soybeans, wheat, and field beans). AOSA, SCST, ASTA, AOSCA, IPSA, and AASCO support using section 12. An effort is being made to have NIST consider changing their requirement, but in any case this is a good time for all seed companies to review procedures for sampling, determining seed counts, and bagging. Words like “approximate” are not allowed by the State of Iowa.

Please feel free to contact the Seed Science Center for any questions you might have on seed counts or any other topic. The Center’s Alan Gaul is an excellent resource for any question dealing with seed conditioning. Please visit www.seeds.iastate.edu for contact information.



John Blake

Crop Inspection Holly Ryan

Crop inspection is not as easy as many people think. I recently went out with John Blake, who now is a retired chemistry teacher from Marshalltown High School, but in the summer has been a crop inspector with Iowa Crop Improvement Association (ICIA) for many years. John remembers when ICIA paid for all meals but does not mind now stopping at the local Casey’s for a coffee or a donut (of course, not on company time).

I went out on my first crop inspection and I have to hand it to the 40 men and women that take on this task during the summer months. Driving to the first field I soon realized three very important keys to success: you need to be good with directions, you should always be prepared for Iowa weather, and you need to know the county road system.

When the field inspector goes out to inspect a field they: take pollen counts, check border rows, look for contaminating corn, walk the field and check the variety, take counts, observe and isolate. The field goes through five field inspections: an isolation inspection, three pollen control inspections, and a purity inspection.

John mentioned that the busy time of crop inspection is when all of your fields are pollinating at the same time. You may need to call your supervisor to help you out during this time. John enjoys crop inspection for the simple fact that it is a healthy alternative to paying a fee at a recreation facility and you get paid to walk the fields.

For more information about ICPT-Corn visit: www.croptesting.iastate.edu

Iowa Crop Performance Test Update

Corn & Soybean Update

Jim Rouse

It seems as though this growing season passed us by like a cool summer breeze. Yes, I know it's supposed to be a warm summer breeze, but that just didn't happen. Through September 6, various regions of Iowa were showing a deficit of 300-400 base 50 degree days. In spite of that, the USDA crop condition report shows over 75% of the corn and soybeans in good to excellent condition. That's good news for the state, but the corn and soybean crop performance test sites are more like The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly.

Fortunately, most of the locations fit the 'good' category. They were planted in a timely fashion, had plenty of moisture, and few environmental problems. 'Bad' is probably too harsh to describe the fields I have in mind. There was a bit of hail damage at Manly and Keystone, but we're not anticipating much of an impact on the yields. Most of the soybean fields had insecticide applied, and about a third of the corn fields received a fungicide application. Overall, though, these fields are in pretty good shape and we don't anticipate any lingering problems.

That leaves us with the 'ugly' fields. The wet weather in late May and June kept us from planting our Fairfield and Melrose locations, both in the SE district. I'm sure you've faced similar situations and realize just how frustrating this situation can be. We're ready to plant, we want to plant, the cooperator wants us to plant, but the fields just weren't fit. Eventually we had to drop those two locations because it was just too late in the season for a good yield trial. We also had some very uneven stands in our soybean plot at Beaman, and it's unlikely we'll get useful data from that site.

Please remember to continue visiting our website, www.croptesting.iastate.edu, for all the latest variety trial information. This is where you'll be able to get your first look at the harvest information. Similar to last year, Iowa Farmer Today will be publishing 'Top 10' and 'Top 20' out-of-the-field results throughout the harvest season. Complete location results will be posted online as soon as they become available. As before, the complete pdf versions of our reports will be available in early December. Iowa Farmer Today, Agri-News, and Iowa Soybean Review will be publishing print versions of the reports in their December issues, too. As always, if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact Jim Rouse at croptesting@iastate.edu.

Integrated Crop Management Conference

The conference will be held December 2-3 at the Iowa State Center, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.

This year's conference has something for everyone involved in crop production and protection in Iowa and the surrounding states. At the conference you will get to choose from over 40 different workshops featuring the latest crop production information from experts around the Midwest. In addition there will be a large number of exhibitors present from crop production and protection. You will be able to receive commercial pesticide applicator recertification credits in categories 1A, 1B, 1C (weed, insect, disease) and 10 (research and demonstration). You will also be able to receive up to 13 CCA continuing education credits. The conference allows you to customize your conference experience to meet your interests and CCA credits needs.

For more information call 515-294-6429 or email aep@iastate.edu.

Seed Today Shaping the Future

Chet Boruff

Considering the topsy-turvy world we find ourselves in today, it is fair to say that anyone's crystal ball could be a little cloudy as they try to look ahead and see what the future holds for our industry. A major farm publication did just that recently and asked their staff writers and contributors to identify 25 people or topics that would change the face of agriculture in the years to come. If these folks have any collective insight at all, perhaps we should take note of their predictions, as several have a direct bearing on the seed industry.

Of course, the list included the new Administration and Congress in Washington, DC, and the major shifts we'll see in farm program payments and investments in rural economies. There is not much we can do there but ride the tide of political posturing. However, some of their other predictions will impact us directly and we have the ability to position ourselves to benefit from these trends.

Some predict that we are entering a new Green Revolution...one where increased productivity goes hand-in-hand with improving our environment. A growing carbon market will follow the implementation of mandatory cap and trade programs, allowing landowners and operators to profit from no-till practices, permanent grassland, and well-managed rangeland. AOSCA provides verification services for this growing market and field inspectors from seed certifying agencies put "feet on the ground" to make sure that farms and ranches enrolled in this market are meeting its requirements.

New crop varieties are predicted to fill the demand for cellulose-based ethanol and other biofuels that will provide the next generation of energy from our farmland. There will be a shortage of well-trained plant breeders to develop the new generations of crops we'll need. Any young people looking for an exciting and rewarding career will do well by considering careers in the seed industry.

There will be a growing demand for market-specific ag production in the future, including organic and natural-based crops. Several seed certifying agencies across the US offer quality assurance, identity-preserved, and organic certification to support these markets. In addition, AOSCA offers the USDA-recognized "Quality Plus" program that helps farm producers implement sound quality management principles to position their businesses for expanding markets of this type.

Struggling financial markets and collapsing corporations in other sectors of our economy are becoming everyday news. Even though the agricultural industry is not immune from these problems, it still provides the foundation upon which to rebuild a strong economy for the future.

AOSCA held its 91st Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon, this past June, and representatives from seed certifying agencies across the US and several other countries met to compare notes and look for ways to support a strong seed industry. Our host, the Oregon Seed Certification Service, planned an interesting and productive meeting. Even though this meeting is now behind us, please know that we are open to comments and suggestions at any time. We welcome businesses and organizations interested in our activities to join us as we work to bring the future into a clearer focus.

Chet is the Chief Executive Officer of the Association of the Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA). He is based in Moline, Illinois and can be reached at 309-736-0120 or at cboruff@aosca.org.

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Dates to Remember

November

- 10-11 Iowa Seed Association Convention & Annual Meeting, Holiday Inn, Ames, Iowa
- 26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday, ICIA Offices Closed

December

- 2-3 Integrated Crop Management Conference, Iowa State Center, Ames, Iowa
- 8-11 American Seed Trade Association Seed Corn, Sorghum, and Soybean Research Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago, Illinois
- 24-31 Christmas Holiday, ICIA Offices Closed

January

- 1 New Year's Holiday, ICIA Offices Closed
- 18 University Holiday, ICIA Offices Closed
- 19-21 Independent Professional Seed Association Annual Conference, The Westin, Indianapolis, Indiana