

Seed Warehousing in Oregon

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THERE are more than 300 seed-cleaning plants in the state of Oregon. It takes this many to clean the seed produced each year. Many of these warehouses are located on small farms and clean a few thousand pounds of seed a year. On the other hand, many plants clean millions of pounds of seed every year and finish their season just in time to start over again. Regardless of the size of operation, these cleaning plants all have one thing in common. It is their job to put a \$30 million product in shape for sale.

Cleaning certified seed

The basic philosophy behind certified seed is the maintenance of genetic purity. Needless to say, if seed of different varieties or species is mixed during the cleaning process or if seed quality standards are not maintained, the advantage of certification is lost.

There are some basic procedures that must be followed when cleaning certified seed.

1. To prevent mixtures:

- ✓ Carefully clean machinery, storage areas, and floors between lots of seed. This is most important when changing from species to species, or variety to variety.
- ✓ Always clearly mark seed containers as to grower and lot number, be they trucks, boxes, bins, or sacks.

2. Proper management after cleaning:

- ✓ Store cleaned seed of one lot in the same area—do not scatter it throughout the warehouse.
- ✓ Mark sacks clearly with a lot number to prevent confusion at time of sampling and shipping.
- ✓ Store seed in an area where it will be accessible to sampling.
- ✓ Keep storage areas clean and free of possible contaminants. Protect seed from the elements (rain from above or wet soil if seed is placed on the ground).

- ✓ Where at all possible, stencil lot numbers neatly on one end of the bag. Store bag so number is visible.

3. Shipping procedures for certified seed:

- ✓ Put cleaned seed in new bags.
- ✓ Keep the new sacks from becoming dirty, wet, or torn.
- ✓ Tag sacks before shipping.

Truth of labeling laws

The truth of labeling laws, recently set forth by the Federal Seed Act, deal mainly with proper record keeping. These laws are administered by the federal government and are mentioned here to prevent misunderstandings of this phase of warehousing. They apply to both certified and uncertified seed. Seed warehousemen should:

1. Keep adequate receiving records of the amount of seed delivered and received "in the dirt." For warehouses that do not have scales, this weight should be approximated.
2. Maintain complete records on each lot of seed, showing the number of bags and the weight of each grade of seed cleaned. These records must include purities, germinations, and material the seed was treated with, if any.
3. Keep a record of the final disposal of each lot for at least three years.
4. When processing and shipping uncertified named varieties of seed, keep a record of the grower's declaration for each lot of seed.

Good image

In the final analysis, Oregon's seed may end up being a good-will ambassador to another state or another nation. It is imperative that Oregon maintain its reputation as a producer of high quality seed.

Because of the stress put on quality seed and the necessity of maintaining genetic identity, Oregon soon will have a warehouse accreditation system. Before a warehouse assumes the responsibility of cleaning certified seed, it must meet the sanitation requirements listed here.



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