



United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
Livestock and Seed Program
Washington, DC 20250

**Organization for Economic Cooperation
and Development (OECD)
Seed Schemes in the United States
PROCEDURES GUIDE**

USDA-AMS-Livestock and Seed Program
Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch
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INTRODUCTION

Background

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Seed Schemes for varietal certification of seed moving internationally promotes the use of agricultural seed of consistently high quality. Certified seeds are produced and officially controlled according to common procedures in 55 participating countries. These seeds are identified by standardized OECD labels that are recognized worldwide. Participation in the OECD Seed Schemes is voluntary; however, if a country chooses to participate, it is required to apply the rules and directions in their entirety.

These agreed principles are embedded in the Rules and Directions of the Schemes, which includes detailed requirements for acceptance criteria for varieties, categories of seed for certification, and standards for seed production and labeling. Participation in the OECD Seed Schemes facilitates seed moving in international trade by utilizing these accepted standards.

The OECD Seed Schemes pertain to seven groups of agricultural crops. The United States currently participates in five of the seven groups, including Grasses and Legumes, Crucifers and other Oil or Fiber Species, Cereals, Fodder Beets and Sugar Beets, and Maize and Sorghum. The United States does not participate in the Subterranean Clover or Vegetable schemes.

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is the Designated Authority responsible for implementing the OECD Seed Schemes in the U.S. in cooperation with official Seed Certifying Agencies (SCAs). AMS' Seed Regulatory and Testing (SRT) Branch, located in Gastonia, NC, is responsible for the administration of the OECD Seed Schemes program.

Purpose of Guide

The purpose of the OECD Procedures Guide is to provide SCAs guidance on conducting activities under the Seed Schemes Program. The Manual is divided into sections that pertain to different functions of the Program. Each section has separate overviews, tables of content, and definitions that relate to the information covered in that particular section.

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Web Site Information

AMS will maintain a web site for U.S. OECD Seed Scheme activities. The address for this site is: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/seed/oecd.htm>

This site will be updated on a regular basis to make sure information is disseminated quickly and easily and reflects the most current policies and procedures.