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Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Livestock and
Seed Program

Items of Interest in Seed Control

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1) What are the labeling standards for plant starter kits?

A1) Labeling regulations for vegetable plant starter kits are the same for labeling packets with less than one pound of seed. Containers or packets having less than one pound of seed must have germination equal to or better than the standard for that seed; standards can be found in Section 201.31 of the Federal Seed Act (FSA) Regulations. Germination percentages and date of test do not have to be shown on these containers or packets. If the germination standard is below the standard set forth in section 201.31, the words "Below Standard" must be clearly shown in a conspicuous place on the label or on the face of the container in type no smaller than 8 point. Each variety that germinates less than the standard shall also be labeled to show the percentage of germination, hard seed (if any), and the calendar month and year the test was completed to determine such percentages.

Q2) Why has tropical soda apple become such a major issue?

A2) Tropical soda apple (*Solanum viarum*) has become an overwhelming weed problem in pastures and rangelands in the Southeastern United States. Populations of tropical soda apple are currently the highest in Florida, but have spread into Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and reported as far north as Pennsylvania. This weed is listed on the USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Federal Noxious Weed list and is becoming a serious concern. It is also listed in section 201.16 of the FSA Regulations as one of the Federal prohibited noxious-weed seeds. This means that agricultural and vegetable kinds of seed, regulated by the FSA, containing one or more tropical soda apple seeds are prohibited from shipment in interstate commerce. This provision of the FSA Regulations became effective January 11, 2001, and is intended to provide a means to help control the spread of this destructive weed. The tropical soda apple weed usually ranges from three to six feet in height with thorny leaves, leafstalks, and stems. The seeds are capable of lying dormant for up to 10 years. Tropical soda apple is very difficult to control because of the lack of effective herbicide alternatives. To help prevent the re-growth and spread of tropical soda apple, landowners and State officials are trying to manage and maintain current populations.

For information regarding this article contact Seed Marketing Specialist Kevin Robinson (704) 810-7264; (Kevin.robinson2@usda.gov).

NORTHEAST SEED ANALYST WORKSHOP

The Northeast Seed Analyst Workshop is being held at the Pennsylvania State seed laboratory September 22 and 23, 2004. Contact Ellen Chirco at the New York Seed Testing Laboratory, 315-787-2242 for more information.

We want to thank ASCONES President Joe Garvey for submitting this information.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

Ernest L. Allen began working as a Biological Laboratory Technician with the Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch (SRTB) in February 2004. He is responsible for processing samples for purity and germination tests. Previously he worked for On Assignment Lab Support, Inc. as a Microbiologist supporting the USDA National Science Laboratory. A native of Greenwood, SC, Ernest is a 2003 graduate of Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC, where he majored in General Biology.

Perry Bohn joined the SRTB in August as a Seed Marketing Specialist (International). Perry has extensive seed experience working for the Arkansas State Plant Board and the Monsanto Corporation. Most recently, Perry worked as a consultant on quality assurance and seed issues.

Charlene Burton was selected as a Botanist in March. Some of her duties include testing agricultural and vegetable seed for germination, purity, and noxious-weed seeds. Charlene came to the branch from the Maryland Department of Agriculture where she was a Seed Analyst for 18 years. She received her B.S. in biology from Towson University, Towson, MD.

Roger Burton was selected in March as a Seed Marketing Specialist. Roger is responsible for the regulation of agricultural and vegetable seed under the Federal Seed Act. Prior to joining SRTB, Roger was with the Maryland Department of Agriculture for 27 years serving as an Agricultural Field Inspector and the last 3 years as a Supervising Inspector in charge of the seed regulatory program.

Carolyn Camidge was selected as an Office Automation Clerk in December 2003. Her duties include general office support for both laboratory and regulatory efforts in the branch. Carolyn has worked for both State and Federal agencies, such as the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, SC, and the Internal Revenue Service in Florida.

Todd Erickson was selected as a Biological Laboratory Technician. Previously, Todd was a Hazard Tree Coordinator (Forestry Technician) at Mt. Rainier National Park in Washington State where he conducted hazard tree and plant community surveys and coordinated tree removals. Todd received a B.S. in Botany from Northern Arizona University in 2001 and a B.S. in Anthropology from the University of Oregon in 1996.

Steve Michalisko started with the branch in February as a new Botanist. Steve came to us from Louisiana where he had recently completed a Master's degree at U.L. Lafayette under the direction of Dr. Caryl Chlan.

Kevin Robinson accepted the position of Seed Marketing Specialist in December 2003. During the summer of 2003, Kevin worked in SRTB's Testing Section as a Laboratory Assistant while finishing school. Kevin graduated from Limestone College, Gaffney, SC, in December 2003.

Winston Robinson was selected as an Office Automation Clerk in January. Previously Winston worked for the State of North Carolina with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Sandra Walker began work in February as Plant Pathologist. She will be testing samples submitted for seed-borne plant pathogens. Sandra transferred from the USDA National Science Laboratory where she was a Microbiologist for the Microbiological Data Program. She received her M.S. in Plant Pathology from North Carolina State University and a B.S. in biology from Western Carolina University.

Gene Wilson accepted the position of Seed Marketing Specialist in January. Before joining the branch, he was a vegetable farmer and greenhouse grower in North Carolina. Prior to that, he was employed by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta as an Assistant Economist. Gene is a graduate of East Carolina University and Clemson University.

Dave Bitzel left the SRTB in June for another position in his home State. Dave has been a botanist with the branch since December 1988. A botanist position has been announced and will be filled in the near future.

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Trueness-To-Variety Program

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RYEGRASS FLUORESCENCE LIST

The current ryegrass fluorescence list by the National Grass Variety Review Board is available on the following Web site:

<http://www.oscs.orst.edu/publications/specialreports/VFL3904List.pdf>

LIST OF PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION CERTIFICATES NO LONGER BEING PUBLISHED

The list of Plant Variety Protection Certificates will no longer be published in the Items of Interest in Seed Control. We apologize for the inconvenience. You can check the status of certification and search for expired certificates by accessing the Plant Variety Protection Office's Web site and entering their Public Access Database:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/science/pvpo/PVPindex.htm>.

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