



Seed Regulatory and Testing Division Spring 2026



ITEMS OF INTEREST IN SEED

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RECENT ACTIVITIES

SRTD COMPLETES ISTA AUDIT

The Seed and Regulatory Testing Division (SRTD) was audited by the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) on March 13. ISTA accreditation confirms that the laboratory follows internationally recognized methods for sampling and evaluating seed quality. This accreditation strengthens the Federal Seed Laboratory Quality Management System and supports global seed trade.

AOSA/SCST RULE PROPOSAL WEBINAR

SRTD hosted a webinar on May 21 covering the proposed AOSA-SCST rule changes, providing clarification and guidance for seed testing laboratories. The session offered participants an opportunity to ask questions and share their perspectives on the proposed changes.

STATE SEED REGULATORS REGIONAL MEETINGS

SRTD conducts regional virtual meetings with State Seed Control Officials (SCOs). The goal of the meetings is to promote better communication and working relationships with SCOs and discuss current industry issues. Topics from the most recent meetings held on April 29, 2026, included:

The Federal Seed Act (FSA) allows companies to ship seeds in interstate commerce for up to 5 months from the test date. However, certain exceptions apply, such as some cool season grass seeds may be shipped up to 15 months from the test date.

SRTD is preparing to update the FSA regulations in the coming months. The current language will be reviewed and compared against current industry practices. More information will be given at upcoming industry meetings and in future issues of Items of Interest in Seed.

SRTD supports the proposed merger between the Association of Official Seed Analysts (AOSA) and the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists (SCST). The leadership and members of both organizations are commended for recognizing the value of a unified seed testing association in North America.

Correct kind names must be used when seeds are shipped in interstate commerce. These names are specified in FSA regulations § 201.2(h) (agricultural seeds) and § 201.2(i) (vegetable seeds). For the full list of approved names, visit this site: [eCFR :: 7 CFR 201.2 -- Terms defined.](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7--agriculture/chapter-I--general-requirements/section-201.2--seed-testing)

The next State seed regulators regional meetings are scheduled for October 2026.

For more information regarding this article, contact Regulatory Manager Lan Chi Trinh at (704) 810-7272; lan-chin.trinh@usda.gov.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING THE FEDERAL SEED ACT

Labeling Seed Country of Origin

Q. Does the Federal Seed Act or other U.S. law require that the country of origin be printed on seed labels?

A. Section 201.14 of the Federal Seed Act (FSA) regulations requires that alfalfa, red clover, white clover, and field corn (except for hybrid seed corn) shall be labeled to show origin.

Section 101(10) of the FSA states, “The term ‘origin’ means the State, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or possession of the United States, or the foreign country, or designated portion thereof, where the seed was grown.”

In other words, alfalfa, red clover, white clover, and non-hybrid field corn must be labeled to indicate the State, or in the case of imported seed, the country in which the seed was grown. The FSA does not require other crops to be labeled according to origin.

Changing Variety Name of Imported Seed

Q. Can the variety name of imported seed be changed?

A. If a foreign variety of seed is imported into the United States and the name is in the Roman alphabet, the name cannot be changed unless the name of the imported seed will cause a conflict with the name of an existing variety already being sold domestically.

If the name of the imported variety will cause a conflict with the name of an existing variety being sold in the United States, the name of the imported variety must be changed prior to sale in the United States.

If the imported variety is identified by an experimental designation (e.g., E123), the variety can be named prior to the first sale in the United States. However, if the variety is offered for sale in the United States with the experimental designation, the experimental designation becomes the variety name. In addition, letters and numbers are considered to be part of the Roman alphabet; therefore, a variety name consisting of letters and numbers cannot be changed when imported into the United States for sale.

Changing Lot Number

Q. When is it necessary to change a lot number?

A. A lot of seed is defined in 201.2(v) of the FSA regulations Part 201 as “a definite quantity of seed identified by a lot number, with every portion or bag being uniform—within permitted tolerances—for the factors which appear in the labeling.”

A lot number is the primary identifying tool on a label and is used for tracking a specific quantity of seed. The lot number should be unique to that specific lot or specific quantity of seed and should be changed anytime the seed in the lot is altered.

Some examples of alterations are as follows:

- If the seed lot is blended with another lot;
- If coating material or seed treatment is added to an existing lot;
- If the lot is reconditioned resulting in a change in seed quality; or
- If a lot is subdivided into portions that are no longer uniform because of treatment, conditioning, different storage conditions, or other factors.

For more information regarding this article, contact Regulatory Manager Lan Chi Trinh at (704) 810-7272; lan-chin.trinh@usda.gov.

NOXIOUS-WEED SEEDS UNDER THE FEDERAL SEED ACT

Section 201.16(b) of the Federal Seed Act regulations identifies certain plant seeds and bulblets as noxious weeds and prohibits their presence in agricultural or vegetable seed shipped across State lines. These rules help prevent the spread of harmful invasive plants and protect farms, ecosystems, and seed quality nationwide. The following are three of those species, and why they are classified as noxious.

***Monochoria vaginalis*: Heartshape false pickerelweed**



Heartshape false pickerelweed (USDA Plants: Steve Hurst. Provided by ARS Systematic Botany and Mycology Laboratory)

Heartshape false pickerelweed (*Monochoria vaginalis*) is an aquatic weed that thrives in rice paddies, ditches, and flooded areas, often overwhelming native plants and reducing water flow. It is established in California, Hawaii, and Guam. Though data on its impacts in the United States are limited, in its native Asian range it's a notorious rice pest which reduces yields up to 82% in dense infestations, indicating potential for significant agricultural harm. With a high climate match across much of the United States, it has the potential to spread widely, which threatens waterway function, crop productivity, and native wetland ecosystems.

***Nassella trichotoma*: Serrated tussock**



Serrated tussock (USDA Plants: Steve Hurst. Provided by ARS Systematic Botany and Mycology Laboratory)

Serrated tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) is a highly invasive grass that forms dense, wiry tufts capable of pushing out nearly all other vegetation, dramatically reducing the quality of pastureland. One plant can produce well over 100,000 seeds that are spread easily by wind, animals, clothing, vehicles, and contaminated hay. The seeds can remain viable in soil for up to 15 years. Although native to South America, serrated tussock has established scattered populations in the United States. Its rapid spread and ability to dominate grasslands make it a serious threat to forage productivity, land management, and native ecosystems.

***Paspalum scrobiculatum*: Kodo millet**



Kodo millet: (USDA Plants: Steve Hurst. Provided by ARS Systematic Botany and Mycology Laboratory)

Kodo millet (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*) is considered a noxious weed because it grows quickly, spreads easily by seed, and forms

thick mats that push out native plants. It thrives in disturbed or wet areas such as roadsides, ditches, and low, soggy fields, where it can occupy the land before other species have a chance to grow. As it spreads, it reduces plant diversity, lowers the quality of grazing areas, and makes land harder to manage. Because of these impacts, it's listed as a noxious-weed seed at the federal level for its potential to harm both natural ecosystems and agricultural lands.

References:

- Canadian Food Inspection Agency. (n.d.). *Serrated tussock*. <https://inspection.canada.ca>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. (n.d.). *Nassella trichotoma: Federal noxious weed disseminules of the U.S.* <https://www.ams.usda.gov>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. (n.d.). *Paspalum scrobiculatum: Federal noxious weed disseminules of the U.S.* <https://www.ams.usda.gov>
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (2021). *Heartshape false pickerelweed (Monochoria vaginalis): Ecological risk screening summary*. <https://www.fws.gov>

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- AOSA-SCST Annual Meeting
Rochester, NY; June 5-11, 2026
- OECD Seed Schemes Annual Meeting
Paris, France; June 15-19, 2026
- AOSCA Annual Meeting
Golden, CO; June 15- 18, 2026
- ISTA Annual Meeting
Calgary, Canada; June 22-25, 2026
- AASCO Annual Meeting
Minneapolis, MN; July 14-16, 2026

- AOSA-SCST Examination
Gastonia, NC; August 18 -19, 2026
- ASTA Forage, Turf & Conservation Seed Conference
Kansas City, MO; November 17, 2026
- ASTA Field Crop Seed Convention
Chicago, IL; December 7-10, 2026

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