

Certified Seed Deal Is "Big Business"

By Norris W. Gilbert



The certified seed industry is "big business" in Arizona!

In most states the production of certified seed is designed primarily to take care of the needs of farmers within the state. But Arizona pure-seed producers go far beyond that limit. Besides supplying local demands for good seed, our growers produce huge quantities of seed of a dozen or more locally adapted crop varieties for use in many other states where the reputation of ARIZONA CERTIFIED SEED is firmly established.

Much Shipped Out

Certified seed of half a dozen different varieties of alfalfa are shipped from Arizona every year to California and other states which do not produce enough for their own use. Enough grain sorghum seed has been harvested for certification in Arizona each year during the last three years to plant over one-third of the nation's entire grain sorghum acreage!

There is a strong trend in this state toward increasing seed of crop varieties not adapted to Arizona. Certified Ranger alfalfa seed is already being grown for consumption in northern states. This fall every pound of Foundation and Registered Buffalo alfalfa

seed which can be obtained will be planted in Yuma County for production of Certified Buffalo, most of which will be used in Kansas and other central states.

New strains of small grains are being increased in Arizona for breeders and seedsmen in other states. Farmers at Yuma have just harvested nearly 2,000 acres of a new Wisconsin variety of malting barley called Moore. Every sack of that seed was grown for North Dakota and Minnesota for planting as certified seed this spring. German crop breeders, even, have discovered Arizona and are anxious to find co-operators who will increase seed of the new Bavarian alfalfa strain under certification.

Certified seed is to the farmer what registered livestock is to the stockman. The aim of both is to guarantee to the purchaser that he is obtaining foundation stock of a pure strain.

Organized in 1933

Organization of the Arizona Crop Improvement Association was completed in 1933. Improved varieties are now able to persist until replaced by something better. Farmers can obtain unmixed, weed-free, viable seed of recommended varieties.

The Arizona Crop Improvement Association is a non-profit, incorporated organization of pure-seed growers which co-operates closely with the Agricultural Extension Service and the Experiment Stations of the University of Arizona and the United States Department of Agriculture. Its certification program is supported through membership and field-inspection fees, and sale of tags and seals.

The office of the association is located at the University so as to be close to its main source of technical assistance, the Pure Seed Advisory Committee. That body, composed of crop specialists of the University and

USDA, sets the standards which are maintained by the association and determines what varieties should be grown for certification.

Directors Are Farmers

Directors of the association are some of Arizona's most prominent farmers. Kenneth B. McMicken of Goodyear Farms at Litchfield is president. Bob Moody of Yuma and Dan Clark of Midvale Farms at Tucson are first and second vice-presidents, respectively. Other directors of the association are Wayne T. Wright of Roll, Orval A. Know of Chandler and J. B. Collorette of Casa Grande. Harold Jacka, secretary-treasurer, manages the certification program in the office and out in the field.

Certified seed has its origin in "parent seed stock," produced in very small amounts by the plant breeder. To multiply parent seed to commercial quantities large enough to fill farm needs, it must be increased through several generations. "Foundation" seed, usually grown on the Experiment Farm, follows parent seed stock and is planted by hand-picked seed growers who produce the "registered," or purple-tag grade. Commercial seed houses co-operate in distributing registered seed to association members, who produce from it the certified blue-tag seed.

Keep Standards High

The association maintains its own certification standards at a level equal to or above those of other states through the co-operation of the International Crop Improvement Association, of which it is a member. As a result, Arizona certified seed is tops in quality and is readily accepted by the trade wherever adapted.

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Harold Jacka (at left), secretary-treasurer of the Arizona Crop Improvement Association, is shown inspecting a wheat field for certification. It is an increase field of D1 wheat on the Ernest Johannsen farm near Yuma. This is a new variety being increased for use in North Dakota.

Pictured on the cover is a field of Certified Hegari Seed in Pinal County.

