



Seed Regulatory and Testing Division Summer 2022



ITEMS OF INTEREST IN SEED

EDITOR'S NOTES

This summer, SRTD staff was happy to be back on the road and once again meeting with the seed industry in-person. This issue of the IOI includes summaries of the meetings that SRTD attended.

This season also brought some big changes to SRTD. Seed Marketing Specialist Supervisor Roger Burton retired. Roger worked with the Maryland Department of Agriculture for 27 years serving as an Agricultural Field Inspector and as a Supervising Inspector in charge of the Seed Regulatory Program. He started working with SRTD in March 2004 as a Seed Marketing Specialist, in 2016 he became the first Regulatory Supervisor. Roger's knowledge and years of expertise was invaluable to SRTD and the seed industry as he has a wealth of knowledge and loved what he did. He will be missed!



Roger Burton with SRTD Director Ernest Allen

On behalf of the SRTD staff, I hope you enjoy these articles and continue to find them informative.

Elizabeth Stewart, IOI Editor

RECENT AND UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

SRTD VISITS WEST VIRGINIA TO DISCUSS COOPERATIVE SEED ACT AGREEMENTS: On July 21, 2022, S&T Deputy Administrator Dr. Ruihong Guo and SRTD Director Ernest, Allen met with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture Commissioner Kent Leonhardt, Deputy Commissioner Joseph Hatton, and Director of Regulatory and Environmental Affairs Amie Minor, to discuss West Virginia's cooperative activities with AMS. The meeting included discussions on the agricultural economy in West Virginia, invasive noxious-weed seeds, seed testing, and State and Federal seed regulatory processes.

DR. YUJIA WU TO PRESENT RESEARCH PAPER AT ISTA SEED SYMPOSIUM: SRTD Plant Physiologist Yujia Wu was invited to present his research paper at the ISTA Seed Symposium in Athens, Greece, to be held November 2-4, 2022. Dr. Wu's paper is entitled, "Polyacrylamide Isoelectric Focusing Electrophoresis for Differentiating Kentucky 31 Tall Fescue Varieties by Esterase Enzyme."

SRTD HOSTS PRESENTATION TO SEED INSPECTORS: On September 7, 2022, Seed Marketing Specialist Rodney McNeace presented a virtual seed inspector training to inspectors from 9 States. USDA Seed Sampler Training provides the state inspectors with the agency's requirements and protocols when sampling seed on behalf of the USDA.

33RD INTERNATIONAL SEED TESTING ASSOCIATION CONGRESS

SRTD Director Ernest Allen participated in the 33rd International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) Congress and Ordinary General Meeting, May 8 – May 11, 2022, in Cairo, Egypt.

At the ISTA Ordinary Meeting on May 11th, Ernest served as the voting delegate on behalf of the Agricultural Marketing Service, which is the U.S. Designated Authority to ISTA.

Usually, the ISTA Congress begins with a three-day symposium covering a variety of topics involving recent advances in seed technology. However, due to pandemic concerns, the ISTA Executive Committee and the Secretariat decided to hold a shorter and smaller meeting by separating the Symposium from the Annual Meeting. The ISTA Seed Symposium will be held November 2-4, 2022, in Athens, Greece.

Select discussion points and decisions of the Ordinary Meeting:

- ISTA members approved the beta testing of electronic certificates (eCertificates) in the third quarter of 2022. If successful, the official launch of ISTA new eCertificates will occur on January 1, 2023. ISTA's eCertificates will provide access for end-users via the ISTA website. Only eCertificates displayed on the website will be valid. The certificates will be in PDF format on the ISTA website and may be printed for filing purposes. ISTA eCertificates issued with a provisional status will automatically update on the website as the status changes. ***Paper certificates will remain available for accredited laboratories and entities that would like to continue using them.***
- ISTA annual membership fees for 2023 will remain unchanged. No increase was proposed by the Executive Committee or the Secretariat of the organization.
- There were 12 proposals submitted to the ISTA Rules Committee. One was withdrawn prior to final vote. 11 proposals were passed. Approved rule changes

which will take effect January 1, 2023, include the following:

New Species and Changes to Species Names

- There were no changes to the Stabilised List; however, to ensure harmonization between the Stabilised List and Chapters within the rules, any species added to Chapter tables will be added to the Stabilised List concurrently.

Rules Changes and New Methods Requiring a Vote

Chapter 1: ISTA Certificates

- Addition of eCertificates to the ISTA Rules. ISTA eCertificates are optional. Accredited ISTA laboratories may continue to use ISTA Orange paper certificates.
- ***Removing the restriction to only issue dust-like species test results on a BIC - This proposal was withdrawn.***

Chapter 3: The purity analysis

- Added additional guidance on reporting results

Chapter 5: The germination test

- Revised the germination method for *Anethum graveolens*
- Added additional guidance on conducting a tetrazolium test at the end of a germination test
- Added information on prechilling temperatures
- Added a Seedling Evaluation Group onto Table 5A

Chapter 7: Seed health testing

- Added an optional filtration method for detection of *Ditylenchus dipsaci* in *Medicago sativa*; *D. dipsaci* and *D. gigas* in *Vicia faba* seed

Chapter 8: Species and variety testing

- Added a DNA-based test for testing *Pisum* varieties
- Added a DNA-based test for testing *Avena* varieties

Chapter 9: Determination of moisture content

- Added bullets in 9.2.7 and 9.3.2.7 to improve clarity

Chapter 19: Testing for seeds of genetically modified organisms

- Made several revisions throughout the chapter including:
 - Addition of the acronym TP for “trait purity”
 - Addition of a new table (Table 19A) that summarizes the types of analytical outputs that can be attained using the different approaches in GMO testing
 - Redrew figure 19.1

For a complete list of changes approved during the Ordinary meeting please visit the ISTA website at www.seedtest.org.

Next year, the ISTA Annual Meeting will be held on May 29 - June 1, 2020, in Verona, Italy.

For more information regarding this article, contact SRTD Director Ernest Allen, (704) 810-8884; ernest.allen@ams.usda.gov.

OECD SEED SCHEMES 2022

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Seed Schemes is an international agreement for the purpose of promoting high-quality seed through the establishment of harmonized standards for certified seed moving in international trade. SRTD serves as the National Designated Authority (NDA), represents the U.S. Seed Schemes, and coordinates the OECD Seed Schemes activities performed by 30 State Seed Certification Agencies (SCA's) under a cooperative agreement.

The Annual Meeting of the OECD Seed Schemes was held in Tallinn, Estonia on June 1-17, 2022. Pending confirmation by the Committee of Agriculture (CoAg) and the OECD Council, the following approved changes will go into effect on January 1, 2023:

- Changes to Common Rule 7.8, which pertains to blending lots of the same

variety, were approved. The changes mainly affect record-keeping and clarify information that should be shared between NDAs.

- Additional work on digitalization of the Seed Schemes was approved. If successful, NDAs will be able to share information more easily on OECD Certified Seed lots and variety descriptions. The Secretariat will continue to seek voluntary contributions to offset start-up costs and finalize the contract with the software developer.
- Requests by Tanzania to extend participation to the Grass & Legume Scheme, the Crucifer Seed and Other Oil or Fibre Species Scheme, and the Vegetable Scheme were approved.
- Standards for certification of monoecious and dioecious varieties of hemp were approved.
- Documents related to addressing disputes between countries, a country self-assessment tool, and emergency operations of the Seed Schemes were approved. None of these directly affect certification activities but give the Secretariat and NDAs some guidance on these matters.
- 2022 was not an election year for Bureau members. Current Bureau members are Mona El-Kasier (Egypt), Chair; Wilhelmina “Willy” Drost (Canada), Incoming Chair; and Kristiina Digryte (Estonia) Past-Chair. A new Bureau member will be elected at the 2023 annual meeting.

Ongoing discussions to be continued by Ad Hoc Working Groups (AHWGs) and the Technical Working Group (TWG) in 2023:

- AHWG on Mixtures of Certified Seed will continue to work on the proposal to eliminate mixture rules from the individual schemes to be replaced by one set of common rules (new Common Rule 12 and associated appendices) governing the mixtures of certified seed. TWG reached compromises on protection of PVP/PBR rights for varieties used in mixtures, referred discussion of labeling requirements for small packages to the AHWG on labeling, and removed the

proposed requirement regarding maximum lot sizes. It was decided to delay forwarding the proposal to the annual meeting until 2023 to allow for additional review at the TWG.

- AHWG on hemp will continue to work on proposed standards for feminized and hybrid seed production processes.
- Proposed requirement to list parent lines as varieties on the OECD international list was referred to the next TWG. Currently, the rules state that if a hybrid is listed, that assumes that parent lines are included. However, this creates a problem when countries ship parent line seed with OECD tags because it is cumbersome to verify that the variety is eligible for certification. A good proposal, but the specific language needs some additional work for clarity, as well as addressing concerns of countries that currently do not list parent lines separately.
- Additional clarifications to the Guidelines for Multiplication Abroad will continue.
- Addition of Pearl Millet to the Sorghum Scheme, which would become the Sorghum and Pearl Millet Scheme, is likely to be approved in 2023. Additional information to address questions will be discussed at the January 2023 TWG.

The next meeting of the Technical Working Group is scheduled for the week of January 23-27, 2023, at the OECD Headquarters conference center in Paris. This meeting will include a review to revise the Strategic Plan adopted in 2017. The 2023 annual meeting is scheduled for June 19-23, 2023, in Antalya, Turkey.

U.S. Program Notes:

Assessment Fees:

The current U.S. OECD Seed Schemes Program assessment fees are 29 cents per hundredweight for corn, and 18 cents per hundredweight for all other species, effective July 1, 2022. Program revenue and expenses will be reviewed this fall and announced in December 2022 what the new fee structure will be effective July 1, 2023.

Reminders:

OECD Variety Query is recommended for confirming that varieties are listed as eligible for

certification (<https://www.niab.com/oecdv2/>). This tool is much easier to use than the PDF version and is updated as varieties are added throughout the year.

Requests for Multiplication Abroad Agreements should be submitted as soon as possible, before or near the beginning of the production season. Requests should include variety or parent line descriptions and details needed by the producing country. Late season requests cause difficulties for the certifying agency in the other country.

Shipments to the EU, and other countries, require OECD labels. Reciprocally, seed coming from those countries should similarly bear OECD labels rather than country labels. Shipments with the wrong labels can be resolved by working with the NDA of the other country, but even if a resolution can be worked out, the seed may still be delayed in getting to the international customer.

For more information regarding this article, contact OECD Manager Steve Malone, (704) 810-8888; stephen.malone@ams.usda.gov. For more information on the OECD Seed Schemes, go to <http://www.oecd.org>.

ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL SEED ANALYST/ SOCIETY OF COMMERCIAL SEED TECHNOLOGIST 2022 ANNUAL MEETING

The AOSA/SCST Annual meeting was held from June 4-9, 2022 in Skokie, IL. This was the first in-person meeting since the start of the Covid pandemic in 2019. Some committee meetings had a zoom link so that analysts who were not able to attend the meeting in person could still participate. Those meetings with the added virtual component included the germination committee meeting, open rules discussion, and long-range planning.

As Rules Committee chair, SRTD Laboratory Supervisor Todd Erickson led the discussion on the new rule proposals. Fifty-five proposals were submitted to the Rules Committee, but only 19 were approved by the Committee to be voted on by the membership. A discussion was held during the Open Rules Session about why the other proposals were rejected and about the use of

surveys as evidence. The guidelines for submitting rule proposals are being updated because of this discussion. Of the 19 proposals put forward for voting, 14 passed, 4 failed, and 1 was withdrawn. Those proposals that did **not** pass included a clarification of how to evaluate borderline seedlings, a new requirement to report the number of contaminants in a purity test, a requirement to report the complete germination method, and a requirement to report abnormal or dead seeds on the report of analysis. The proposals that did pass included 5 new species added to the rules, some common name additions, clarifications on submitted sample size, reporting contaminants, and seedling sketches of the Apiaceae family.

The committee meetings were very well attended. SRTD Botanist Elizabeth Stewart discussed TZ testing methods for Indian Ricegrass and new additions to the Tetrazolium Handbook. Todd Erickson, as the chair of the Lab Standards and Documentation Committee, discussed the committee's goal to develop a document control system for the organization, and work with each committee to post those documents online. Seed Marketing Specialist Chi Trinh presented in the Regulatory Committee meeting. Other topics discussed included the need for a formal training program for RST/CSA candidates, recruitment strategies for laboratories, AOSA bylaw changes, and the use of new technologies in seed testing.

Next year's meeting will be in Saskatoon, Canada. For more information regarding this article, contact Laboratory Supervisor Todd Erickson, (704) 810-8877; todd.erickson@usda.gov.

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN SEED CONTROL OFFICIALS 2022 ANNUAL MEETING

Deputy Administrator Dr. Ruihong Guo, Jeffery Haynes, Commissioner of the Plant Variety Protection Office, and Seed Marketing Specialist Lan Chi Trinh represented the AMS Science & Technology Program at the AASCO annual meeting, that was held in Geneva, New York on July 12-15, 2022.

Dr. Guo presented updates on the 2020 and 2021 S&T activities. Commissioner Haynes presented an update on PVPO activities and answered

questions from attendees. Lan Chi Trinh presented a report on Federal Seed Act (FSA) activities and SRTD updates. Other presentations included Jordan Gregory (ASTA), Johnny Zook (AOSA/SCST), Sarah Wilbanks (AOSCA), and Christina Rowan (CFIA).

During the general session, Lan Chi Trinh gave a presentation on the Federal Seed Act and how it is enforced by SRTD.

There were many interesting presentations given at the AASCO meetings. Topics ranged from seed innovation and protection, weed ecology and management, and seed treatments. There were discussions about handling noxious-weed seeds, allowing QR code on seed labels, biological seed treatments and its expiration date, coated vs. treated seed, and cover crops.

There were three proposed amendments to RUSSL, and all passed.

Mr. Roger Burton from SRTD was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition for his dedicated service to AASCO and the seed industry.

For more information about AASCO visit <http://www.seedcontrol.org>

For more information regarding this article, contact Seed Marketing Specialist Lan Chi Trinh, (704) 810-7272; Lan-ChiN.Trinh@usda.gov

SEED TRAINING WORKSHOP IN GASTONIA, NC

SRTD held a Seed Analysts Training Workshop in Gastonia, NC, on August 15-17, 2022. Sixteen seed analysts from State and private laboratories attended. The workshop focused on purity and identification of similar crop and weed species, with emphasis on identification of noxious-weed seeds. Other topics included: seed and seedling structures, germination and botany terms, pure seed unit definitions, uniform blowing procedure, and various calculations.

Following the workshops, the purity and germination exams were given to analysts to become either a Certified Seed Analyst (CSA) or a Registered Seed Technologist (RST).

The workshop promotes uniformity in testing by fostering greater compliance with State and Federal seed-labeling laws. The mission of the

Federal Seed Act is to promote uniformity in seed laws and fair competition within the seed industry. This effort is supported by State seed control programs through authorization provided by cooperative agreements between the States and the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

For more information regarding this article, or information on how to register for 2023 seed school, contact Laboratory Supervisor Todd Erickson (704) 810-8877; todd.erickson@usda.gov.



Participants and staff of the 2022 SRTD Seed School

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ISTA Seed Symposium – Athens, Greece
November 2-4, 2022
- OECD Technical Working Group Meeting-
Paris, France
January 23-27, 2023
- ISTA Annual Meeting – Verona, Italy
May 29-June 3, 2023
- AOSA/SCST Annual Meeting –
Saskatoon, Canada
June 9-15, 2023
- OECD Annual Meeting – Antalya Turkey
June 19-23, 2023

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