

# Growing Certified Wheat Seed

A one page summary of how to grow Certified wheat seed in Colorado

**Making Decisions:** The first step is deciding which variety to grow. Essentially all new wheat varieties in Colorado protected by PVP (the Plant Variety Protection Act), and are handled by a genetics provider. There are many providers licensing varieties in Colorado, including the Colorado Wheat Research Foundation (CWRF), Syngenta/AgriPro, Monsanto/WestBred, Limagrain Cereal Seeds, NuPride, Kansas Wheat Alliance, and Watley Seed. In order to grow one of their varieties, you need to contact them, discuss licensee arrangements, and learn about how royalties will be collected. The royalty is an additional fee charged on the sale of certified seed which supports continued wheat breeding efforts. Normally the seed grower will need to mark up the cost of seed to cover the associated royalties, so this needs to be considered.

**Planting:** Next, find a source of Foundation or Registered seed. You must be authorized by the genetics provider to receive and plant this seed. Let the CSGA office know you plan to produce Certified seed. Review the land requirements in the CSGA Standards book. Generally, a field producing Certified seed needs to be out of wheat for one year, and a field producing Registered seed needs to be out of wheat for two years. Select a clean piece of land, preferably free of any noxious weeds. Thoroughly clean out the drill before planting.

**Prepare Fields:** In the spring, fill out an Application for Field Inspection, which also serves as a Membership application. The deadline for winter wheat is May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The appropriate fees are due with the application. Treat the fields with herbicides if necessary to control weed infestations. Rogue fields of unwanted plants prior to arranging field inspection. Remember, there are tolerances for off-type wheat plants and for the amount of jointed goatgrass which can be present. There is zero tolerance for bindweed and feral rye. If an area of the field is not going to be saved for seed, clearly mark off the area not to be inspected.

**Inspections and Harvesting:** Call the CSGA office to arrange field inspection approximately two weeks prior to your expected harvest date. Meet with the inspector to provide directions to fields and discuss any problem areas. Observe good harvest practices by cleaning combines, grain carts, trucks, and bins between varieties. Send in a preliminary germination sample, if desired, to make sure the seed is of proper quality to merit conditioning.

**Conditioning:** Condition the seed through an Approved Conditioner to meet certification requirements. If you condition your own seed, you must be a Class V conditioner. If the seed is custom conditioned, it must be done by a Class I Approved Conditioner. You may transfer seed to an approved conditioner or to another seed grower who will sell the seed with his label. Notify CSGA of the transfer by filling out a Transfer Form.

**Testing:** While conditioning the seed, pull a sample for analysis at a seed testing lab. See the CSGA Standards for the proper way to pull a sample. Send 2 pounds of seed in a clearly marked container to a seed testing lab. Most seed is sent to the Colorado Seed Lab at CSU with a Seed Sample Form to clearly identify the seed and requests tests. If the seed passes all specifications, the CSGA will issue a Certification certificate for the seedlot.

**Selling:** Once the seed has been certified by the CSGA office, it can be labeled, marketed, and sold as Certified seed. You must label the seed, either with a Bulk Sales Certificate or Bulk Invoice Label (if sold in bulk), or a bag tag (adhesive or sew-on) if sold in a bag. Labeling the seed is a requirement of CSGA, the Colorado Seed Act, and the Plant Variety Protection Act. Selling unlabeled seed is a serious violation which can lead to expulsion from CSGA and legal action from both the State and the variety owner. A Distribution Summary will need to be filled out at the end of the season and is typically due to the CSGA office on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Questions:** Do not hesitate to call the CSGA office at (970) 491-6202 with any questions about seed certification in Colorado. Also feel free to visit our website at [www.seeds.colostate.edu](http://www.seeds.colostate.edu) to learn more about our program.