

Certification

The word "certified" means "assured, made certain, or endorsed authoritatively." To merit the term, the product must be produced under certain rules and regulations prescribed by an official certifying agency.

Certified, applied to seed, means that the product has known or assured parentage and that it has been produced under rules and regulations which insure preservation of its identity and its genetic purity.

Certified seed is produced by growers who cooperate with crop improvement associations or with state departments of agriculture. Either or both may serve as the certifying agency. A **Blue Tag** is the well-known mark of certified seed.

Blue Tag certified seed can be traced by lot number to the "mother" or breeder seed. Breeder seed of Merion Kentucky bluegrass was produced at Penn State from a pound of seed sent by Fred Grau at Beltsville to Bert Musser at Penn State. A few ounces of breeder seed were planted under close supervision to produce foundation seed. Growers planted seed to produce Blue Tag certified seed which would be sold to golf courses and sod farms where discriminating supts. and operators wanted to be sure that they were getting only Merion.

Another example is Penngift Coronilla (crownvetch). The Breeder seed is produced only from the tiny farm where it was discovered in

1935. Planted in isolated protected fields, breeder seed produces foundation seed which is furnished to growers who desire to produce Blue Tag certified seed. Each generation is carefully protected to assure the buyer that the product he plants is genuine Penngift.

Penncross bentgrass seed can be certified only if the three vegetative parents (breeder stock) are purchased from qualified growers and if not more than three (3) crops of seed are taken from the fields. Apparently some growers continue to harvest seed after the three-year limitation. It is sold as Penncross but does not merit the Blue Tag and, therefore, can't be certified.

Uncertified seed carries no assurance of genetic purity. Everyone should be familiar with the Latin expression, "caveat emptor" which means "Let the buyer beware" or "He buys at his own risk." He who buys uncertified seed has no redress when plants, which are other than those expected, emerge. There is discussion on a proposed ruling that a variety name may not be used for any seeds not eligible to carry the Blue Tag of certification.

Certification usually implies that the seed also is of high mechanical purity and has excellent germination. This is not always true but most producer-processors pride themselves on a high-quality product in all respects when it merits the Blue Tag. Certification is denied when purity falls below an accepted standard or when weed seed content is higher than acceptable.

that they water fairways three times a week. Obviously, their courses are not being watered on the basis of need, but from habit. It may have been a coincidence that the main topic of the conference was "Poa Annua Control."

Another conclusion of researchers is

that water should be supplied only as fast as the soil can absorb it. Thus, the infiltration rate is an important agronomic consideration. Development of soil cultivating equipment has made it possible to improve infiltration capacity, but its

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