

UCIA reaches 80 years of certifiying seeds, improving crops

By Shelby Ruud, USU Ag Experiment Station

This spring the Utah Crop Improvement Association (UCIA) celebrates 80 years of providing an important service to farmers and land managers in Utah by certifiying that they have access to seeds that have met standards of quality and genetic purity.

Established April 19, 1937, the UCIA is a non-profit corporation of seed growers and conditioners and was designated as the official state certification agency. Working in conjunction with the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station at Utah State University as the certifiying agency, UCIA inspects and verifies the quality of seed used by farmers, ranchers, and other seed buyers wherever UCIA-Certified Seed is sold.

The process of certifiying seed involves verifying seed sources, inspecting seed fields, supervising seed crops after harvest, conducting seed sampling and testing, and analyzing seeds to ensure they meet specific standards and for genetic purity.

One important function of the UCIA is assisting in the continued release of improved new crop varieties. The Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, seed

companies, and scientists, such as wheat breeders, send the UCIA small amounts of a new and improved crop variety. The UCIA then increases that amount and makes it available to farmers and seed growers.

“These new varieties are going to produce better crop yields, better milling or forage quality, and more disease-resistant crops,” said Michael Bouck, UCIA manager. “The end result is a better food supply, and that’s something we can all benefit



from.”

Additionally, using certified seed saves farmers and growers money, according to Clark Israelsen, Utah State University Extension associate professor of agriculture.

“We heartily encourage all growers to purchase proven seed of known purity and verified germination,” Israelsen said. “When using uncertified seed, any per-

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So a concise definition of "duty of water" or diversion duty for irrigation is the maximum amount of water needed, as determined by the State Engineer, to reasonably irrigate crops to maturity in a given location, expressed in acre-feet per acre per irrigation season and measured at the diversion from the source. Diversion duty is not an entitlement which may be diverted regardless of need nor can use be enlarged within the diversion duty by claiming improved efficiency, it is the maximum amount of water the state engineer believes is reasonably necessary to irrigate an acre of ground in a particular location given current conditions and assumed efficiencies.

SEEDS

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ceived savings on the front end of a crop is soon lost on the back end with increased weed pressure, lower yields and reduced quality."

Among the crops typically certified in Utah or that originated here are several varieties of barley, potatoes and oats, as well as alfalfa and wheat that are particularly important to Utah's agricultural economy.

In addition to the agricultural benefits, the UCIA helps with restoration efforts. Over the last 20 years, Utah and the UCIA have become a center for wildland-collected seed that is used by federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Forest Service,

as well as many other government and private agencies, for rangeland restoration and rehabilitation. UCIA certifies seed for a number of grasses, forbs and shrubs.

"If a site is disturbed by abuse, drought or fire, it becomes infested with weeds," Bouck said. "This makes the site even more susceptible to fire, and it becomes a cycle. It's important to return the proper seed to the proper site, and these government organizations count on us to help them do that."

More information about the UCIA and seed certification in Utah can be found at utahcrop.org.

Survey seeks participation

Those interested in the results of the four previous survey years, can view them at <https://goo.gl/o3DKuI>.

Data from these surveys are used to help guide policy, research, and education on cover crops nationwide.

For educational materials on cover crops, visit SARE's Cover Crops Topic Room at <http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Topic-Rooms/Cover-Crops>.

The survey is being conducted by the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC), USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE), and the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), with help from Penton Media through their Corn and Soybean Digest publication.

If you have issues with this survey or questions, please direct them to Chad Watts at the Conservation Technology Information

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