



MICHIGAN
CROP IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION™

Michigan Seed Bulletin

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The Official Seed Certifying Agency

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Little Things

CHRIS TIEDJE

What is quality Certified Seed? Quality begins with a state of mind. It starts with an attitude each seedsman has when they grow, condition, and handle Certified Seed. Quality is not just going through the motions of producing seed, but to make the seed the most it can be. True quality does not exist when a person is thinking about cost-cutting or loopholes in the system. Quality is knowing you have something special that other people could benefit from.

It takes a special person to change grain into quality seed. It takes a seedsman. A seedsman is an individual concerned about the many details in seed production and handling. They choose the best field to plant the seed, the right weed control and its application, the isolation of diseased or problem areas, the right time and moisture to harvest, and the best seed conditioning possible. All these factors add “value” to the product – Certified Seed.

Quality all boils down to the little things that separate the best from the rest of the crowd. Between similar products, it is often only little things that separate one from the other. Auctions are the same way. Sometimes there is only a one-dollar difference between getting an item at an auction or not. The same is true about products. There may only be one small factor between the product selling or not. With the case of certified seed, it may only be whether or not a color sorter was used or the

percent seed defects removed with it. Little factors like this make one product different from another, but these factors may change from year to year. Bruce Barton said it well in the following words: “Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things . . . I am tempted to think . . . there are no little things.”

Effective marketing requires products to be different and unique through little things. Differentiation is an important marketing principle. You can’t expect to be paid any more for a product if it isn’t any different from your competitors. Marketing Certified Seed is no different. Certified Seed is distinguishable from the crop taken to the elevator in test weight, germination, brightness, and appearance. It also has to be distinguishable from other varieties of seed by either standability, diseased resistance, or yield. The composite of all factors makes Certified Seed what it is. A good seedsman has the skills to make Certified Seed what it should be by adding value through these little details just as a good farmer does with their crop.

Fun Fact



In 1929 Zehnder’s Restaurant in Frankenmuth served 312 chicken dinners. Today the same restaurant serves over 950,000 pounds of chicken per year to over one million guests!

The President's Post

BY CHRIS SCHMIDT, MCIA PRESIDENT



A seemingly continuous wet and dreary October soybean harvest, not to mention an equally wet and

dreary October for wheat planting, tends to make one forget quickly just how spectacular September was for dry bean harvest and subsequent early wheat planting. Hard to believe those two months occurred back-to-back – and in the same year!

While maybe not the most spectacular dry bean yields this year compared to previous recent years, the crop came in with respectable yields and even better quality. Absent in 2023 was the angst and handwringing caused during and following the 2022 harvest due to some quality issues observed in the Adams black bean variety. Adams had looked to become the new black variety growers were anticipating hav-

ing checked all the boxes with the exception of seed coat quality and color. Recognizing the importance within the canning industry of the ultra-high quality table stock beans Michigan is known for, your MCIA Board of Directors voted to forgo future sales of Foundation class Adams seed stock at our December 2022 board meeting effectively bringing an end to Adams.

Recognizing that this decision would leave a gaping hole in the certified black bean seed line-up, MCIA collaborated with MSU to accelerate the development and introduction of several new black bean varieties. Taking a few precious pounds of seed grown in the MSU greenhouses to Puerto Rico for a winter increase was completed in 2023 thus shaving a year off their release timeline. The production from the Puerto Rico harvest was sent to Idaho this past spring and increased again. Within a few short years, MCIA has enough breeder stock of B19344, which will be named Black Pearl, to plant 40 acres in Idaho this spring. This will allow MCIA to access Foundation class Black Pearl

for the 2025 planting season. Following close on the heels of Black Pearl is another black bean, B20536, which will have Foundation class seed available in 2026 and be known as Kona.

Both Black Pearl and Kona show considerable promise to become the new market leaders and hopefully check every single box the entire bean industry in Michigan expects from MSU. I encourage all my Michigan seed growing brethren to acquire seed stock of each of these two new varieties as they become available through Michigan Crop Improvement Association. Every commercial grower I've had conversations with over the past year compliments the overwhelming quality of Michigan grown Certified Seed and they anticipate excellent results from these new black varieties coming through the pipeline.

Be safe out there as we trudge through winter and appreciate the simple blessings of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Schmidt". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Lab update

LAUREN BOGI

As 2023 closed its doors, 2024 came in with a bang for our seed lab! We have been fantastically busy with dry bean germination, as well as corn, soybean, and small grains.

During the cold and snowy months ahead, as producers and farmers, it is important to really focus on where you're placing each variety of seed that's going in the ground this spring. The number of days available to plant in ideal conditions is usually very limited. Chances are there will be excessive moisture and/or cold temperatures which make knowing the quality of your seed lots

paramount when making planting decisions. Mother Nature is unpredictable. During spring planting, don't guess which varieties or hybrids will outperform others if planted early, be prepared ahead of time, get your seed tested!

Below are some important tests to help determine where your variety or hybrid meets the mark going into Spring:

- **Saturated Cold:** A good test to determine if your corn or soybean seed is suitable for early planting. This test simulates chilling shock and low oxygen levels by testing seeds in cold, saturated soil. It does provide a useful estimate of emergence under severe conditions.

- **Fast Green/Pericarp:** Used in seed corn to detect damage to the pericarp (seed coat). This test provides useful insight regarding both seed conditioning and the risk of using starter fertilizer. If the seed coat damage is severe, fertilizers with high salinity could damage or kill the seed, leading to poor seedling emergence and stand. The amount of pericarp damage shown in this test can identify how susceptible a seed lot may be to soil pathogens, pests, and microorganisms.
- **Tetrazolium Test (TZ):** A quick 24-hour germination estimate. This

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In Search Of...

Development and sales of Foundation dry edible seed bean varieties have been one of the most important segments of business for MCIA over the past three decades. In fact, foundation dry bean seed accounts for almost one-third of MCIA's total revenues. Prior to 2021, MCIA had been extremely fortunate to have Dr. James Kelly as the Dry Bean Breeder at Michigan State University.

For over four decades Dr. Kelly masterfully bred dry beans and ultimately released over 50 unique varieties. Names like C-20 navy, Zorro black, Red Hawk Dark Red Kidney and Zenith black are just a few of the varieties that have been used on millions of dry bean acres over the past 40 years. As the premier dry bean breeder in the world, Dr. Kelly continually churned out excellent varieties which were released to MCIA for the benefit of our membership and dry bean growers around Michigan and the United States.

When he retired in 2020, he was eventually replaced by Dr. Fransisco Gomez. However, after two years in the position, Dr. Gomez moved on, leaving a considerable hole in the development of new cultivars for dry bean growers and MCIA Seedsmen. The good news is MSU has committed to hiring a new top-notch candidate to replace Dr. Gomez, who has now been gone almost a year. Recently, MSU has announced they have identified and scheduled interviews for three candidates in anticipation of filling this important position.

MCIA has been invited to participate in the interview process and been given dedicated time to meet with each candidate. We will also provide input to the selection committee as to the suitability of each candidate from the perspective of MCIA. I will be attending these seminars and interview sessions through the month of January. I am optimistic there will be a candidate chosen to continue to carry on and advance the MSU dry bean program.

The hiring of an exceptional dry bean breeder will not only contribute to the advancement of the MSU dry bean program, but secure the continued success of MCIA and its membership. I will keep you informed as the selection process unfolds.

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test is a very good measurement of mechanical damage in soybeans and sprouting in small grains. Individual seeds are dissected to assess potential root or shoot injury, disease, radical damage, frost, or decay, then seed is rated in categories of high, medium, low, and dead.

- **Accelerated Aging (AA):** This is essential information to know for storage capabilities for seeds harvested with high moisture or green soybeans. Seeds are exposed to stress induced hot and humid test conditions. This test is available for corn, soybean, and grains, and is essential for determining early season vigor in dry bean seed.

If you have any carryover seed still in bags, bins, or wagons we strongly suggest testing that as well. This may seem bothersome, but think of the



A corn saturated cold test revealing dead and abnormal seedlings. This hybrid will not perform well in wet, cold planting conditions.

alternative – bad emergence, replant, insect damage, dead seed, mechanical damage, etc. Let's be honest, you compare how well your field looks relative to your neighbors, don't start with a poor stand.

All of us in the lab want to be a helping hand in creating the best sense of what is going on within your seed. If you have any questions, we are here to help!

Dry Bean Deadline Reminder

TOM SILER

The Michigan Seed Law requires seed sold in Michigan which is produced east of the Great Continental Divide, be field inspected and laboratory tested for blight and anthracnose.

This lab testing serves as one of the last lines of defense to mitigate the number of diseased seed lots entering the market and helps ensure customers are provided with a quality product.

The sample submission deadline for seed grown in 2023 is March 30, 2024. Afterwards, sample submission will not be available until October 2024. If you have dry bean seed that still needs blight and anthracnose testing, send it in sooner rather than later.



Michigan Crop Improvement Association
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SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY 27

2023-2024

MCIA Annual Meeting

Eagle Eye Banquet Center
Bath, MI

Hear from your Board President, MSU Plant Breeders, MCIA Staff, MDARD Representatives and more. The meeting concludes at noon with a delicious lunch to follow.

CCA and pesticide credits will be available.

Register today at

WWW.MICHCROP.COM

We look forward to seeing you there!

Contact Us

Phone: (517) 332-3546

Email: info@michcrop.com

Website: www.michcrop.com

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Michigan Crop Improvement Association

Calendar of Events 2024

February 15 *MCIA Office*
Order Changes for Spring Foundation Seed Due

February 27 *Eagle Eye Banquet Center, Bath*
MCIA Annual Membership Meeting

April 15 *MCIA Office*
Year in Advance Seed Orders Due

April 15 *MCIA Office*
Membership Application Due

April 8-10 *Custer, SD*
AOSCA Regional Meeting