Happy Holidays

Wishing all of our growers, contractors, handling facilities and associates a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. Thank you for making 2016 another great year. May the New Year be one of health, happiness and prosperity for you and your family.

Board of Director Results

The final votes have been tallied for districts 4 & 6. We had some great candidates and congratulations go to Steve Grove from Moccasin and Bill Edwards from Lindsay. Each director has been elected to a three year term. A special thank you to Charlie Cahill of Scobey for serving District 6 so well over the past six years. MSGA would also like to say thank you to all of the producers who took the time to cast their vote. The next Board of Directors meeting will be held in February. Please contact your representatives if you have any topics you’d like discussed.

BOD Meeting

The MSGA Board of Directors will hold its annual meeting Tuesday and Wednesday, February 7th and 8th 2017, at the MSGA Office in Bozeman. If you have comments or concerns that you think should be addressed, feel free to call your district board member or the MSGA Office. Board member contact information can be found on the MSGA website. A number of items with regard to the seed standards of various crops have already been brought to our attention for the agenda.
Manager Update

MSGA would like to sincerely say "thank you" to all of you, our customers and clients, for your cooperation in the seed certification process this year. We appreciate your patience as our office has been going through some changes. We would also like to thank all of our field inspectors, for without them this process would not be possible. They put in countless hours this season to ensure that your fields were inspected in a timely manner. We had just over 100,000 acres applied for in 2016.

Here is a crop breakdown of acres passed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa</td>
<td>6,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickpea</td>
<td>5,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pea</td>
<td>16,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRSW</td>
<td>14,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>13,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentil</td>
<td>5,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safflower</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWSW</td>
<td>1,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola</td>
<td>2,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oat</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durum</td>
<td>4,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRWW</td>
<td>24,161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We hope the 2016 seed production season proved successful for everyone, and we look forward to working with you again in 2017.

Changes to Testing of Red Wheat

Effective January 1st the Montana State Seed Testing Lab (and all labs) will be testing all red wheat samples for kernels of contrasting color. At the AOSCA annual meeting the Certification Requirements and Standards Council considered and passed a change to the wheat seed standards in the section dealing with wheat seed testing. These changes mandate that for all certified classes "All wheat samples shall be visually assessed for kernels of contrasting color".

This issue was discussed at previous AOSCA meetings as to how labs address testing for contrasting color classes. Currently Montana uses a NaOH test to look for red kernels in white wheat, but this had not been done on red wheat samples looking for white kernels. Due to the new AOSCA regulations requiring that all certified wheat samples are assessed your lab reports will look a bit different. At this time the Montana State Seed Lab will be using a visual assessment to look at the purity portion (100 grams) of all samples submitted for a purity. **This test is required to be done before you can issue tags for sale of these lots.** At this time there will be no additional costs to the sample submitter and you will not need to fill out any additional paperwork. You may however notice some differences on your labs with the addition of “other crop-wheat”. If a sample has a large amount of white wheat it may need to be sent off for further testing to determine if those seeds are of the same variety. MSGA will be working with you on a case by case basis. Please let us know if you have any questions and thank you for your patience during this transition.
As many of you know, Foundation Seed Manager Bill Grey retired one year ago and is making the transition remarkably well. Following in the footsteps of Bill, Howard Bowman, and Art Shaw, I started in the same position April 4, 2016. I came to Montana State University understanding the significance of public and private breeding programs and the importance of maintaining the genetic integrity of varieties in providing the state with performance dependability and consistency. I believe strongly in selecting the variety most adapted to your expectations and putting it in a position to succeed. Teaming with the Department of Plant Sciences/Plant Pathology, College of Agriculture, and statewide Agricultural Research Centers, we will strive to continually serve the Montana Seed Industry and producers.

In the quick eight months leading to now, I have made it a goal to be visible and approachable statewide. With the chauffeuring of MSGA’s Heather Rimel, we have visited over 20 seedhouses across the state to exchange ideas but more importantly listen to what is needed and expected. I’ve also visited five of the MSU research centers while beginning connections statewide, regionally and nationally to best represent seed standards.

The strong team of professionals at the Post Research Farm, Central Ag Research Center, Eastern Ag Research Center and Northern Ag Research Center all contributed to a successful 2016 season of producing Foundation Seed. Strong yields of good quality seed were followed quickly with 2017 winter wheat foundation planting. Conversations at the MT Grain Growers and Seed Trade Meeting have us as interested as everyone else in seeing how this spring planting rolls out.

Notes of interest….

The new MSU semi-solid hard red winter wheat “Loma” was distributed statewide this fall to seed growers as foundation seed. New MSU hard red spring wheat “Lanning” will be planted at Bozeman and Havre and available to seed producers spring of 2018. “Willow Creek” forage winter wheat had a Cert to Cert production exemption for 2016 planting. Our website will be under construction soon with a new unveiling early this spring.

I value the time Montanans have invested in me to this point and look forward to many years of valuable partnerships. Please feel free to call on me anytime at (office) 406-994-5687, (cell) 406-404-5726 or douglas.holen@montana.edu.
Montana State Seed Testing Lab Update

Holiday Greetings from the Montana State Seed Testing Lab. Thank-you for sharing your samples with us. We truly appreciate your business.

Sample flow in the laboratory has increased by about 400 samples as compared to last year. Turn-around time of the cereal and pulse crops is within 24 hours 90% of the time. Grasses take longer and always will. Some things you just can’t hurry through without making a mistake.

The Regional Pulse Lab is an independent entity. They handle the Ascochyta and other fungal, bacterial and viral testing of your Peas, Lentils and Chickpeas. We handle the receiving and issuing of reports for them. It is a beneficial relationship and Bright has a fantastic crew who are efficient and great to work with.

I wanted to apologize for missing the Seed Trade business meeting. You had questions regarding the benefits of the PCR testing that will soon be coming. Here is a little information and some updates: We split the purchase of the PCR machine and all the accompanying equipment with the Regional Pulse Lab. They will be running the initial testing. Education and establishment of proficiency will need to be obtained before this service can be offered. In anticipation of your needs this service will help solve problems with varietal identifications, the presence or absence of GMO’s and other event specific testing needs. Several countries have legislation requiring testing for GMO’s before food or feed products can be imported. Even here in Montana, counties are passing legislation prohibiting the planting of anything genetically modified. The need for this testing could become huge in the future so we are trying to work toward that end goal of being ready. No pricing has been discussed but we will try to keep it low and competitive.

Please don’t hesitate to call with questions. If we can’t answer it we will find someone who can.

Once again, Merry Christmas. May Peace be with you, your family, friends and pets.

Sincerely,
Montana State Seed Testing Laboratory Staff
Bridget Westfall, Faye Jorgensen, Rachael Black and the Richelle O’Leary.

Welcome to the MDA Program Manager

Bob Ballensky joined the Montana State Department of Agriculture as the Seed / Commodity Warehouse/Dealer Program Manager in October 2016. Bob was most recently been employed by the Standlee Hay Company, Twin Falls Idaho, as the Vice President of Supply Chain. Bob’s agriculture experiences includes 25 years of supply chain management in the vegetable seed industry. Bob has a degree in Agricultural Business from Montana State University.

He can be reached at:

**Bob Ballensky**
Seed and Commodity Dealer/Warehouse Program Manager
Commodity Service Bureau
Montana State Department of Agriculture
406-444-3950 office
208-738-8920 cell
bballensky@mt.gov