

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

■ Limagrain Cereal Seeds stakes reputation on ensuring seed purity

Brad Erker responsible for ensuring LCS seed standards are met

FORT COLLINS, Colo. - Wheat farmers want the purest, most vigorous seed of the best wheat varieties to be certain their crop will be as high-yielding and disease-resistant as possible, and Limagrain Cereal Seeds (LCS) goes the extra mile to help growers meet those goals.

Fort Collins-based Limagrain Cereal Seeds - the U.S. subsidiary of Group Limagrain, one of the world's largest developers and breeders of wheat varieties - is working with its American seed producers to develop wheat seeds that consistently meet or exceed national and individual state seed certification standards.

Brad Erker, LCS' Product Development Manager, said the company strives to produce the purest seed available.

"We intend to participate in the seed certification system to the greatest degree possible," Erker said.

That includes meeting the requirements of AOSCA, the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies, which is the national organization that sets minimum standards for varietal purity.

"I work with our plant breeders to help them produce pure seed and get it into the AOSCA system," Erker said. "We create brand-new varieties that never existed before."

Erker said Limagrain goes through several key steps to ensure seed quality, starting with on-the-ground field inspections. Inspectors watch for "off-type" plants that can signal a lack of seed purity as well as weed problems that can impact a field's productivity.

The production of pure seed also requires every piece of equipment involved in the process to be cleaned thoroughly between uses.

After harvest, the wheat seed must be conditioned, or cleaned of all weed residue, inert material and other impurities. The next step is laboratory testing at public and private test labs, including Colorado State University's lab in Fort Collins.

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“Since we grow wheat seed nationwide, we utilize labs all across the country,” Erker said.

“After the seed is conditioned, it must be tested for germination and purity,” he said. “The purity test verifies for purchasers that impurities have been removed and they’re not going to be planting other things. The germination test verifies that these are seeds that will actually grow and establish a good stand in the field.”

Erker said while AOSCA requires a minimum germination rate of at least 85 percent, LCS’ target is much higher.

“We shoot for 95 percent or better,” he said. “By using the AOSCA system, we’re stating we commit to meet or exceed the requirements of every state selling our seeds.”

Erker, who served as Director of Colorado Seed Programs for seven years before joining LCS last October, said the company’s commitment to producing the purest seed possible is further demonstrated by hiring him to be the product development manager.

“Limagrain has a strong focus on producing the highest-quality seed possible,” he said. “My job is to work with the AOSCA agencies, work with the breeders and to constantly work on ways to improve seed quality and purity.”

For more information, visit limagraincerealseeds.com.

Group Limagrain was founded in France in 1942. The farmer-owned company has 7,000 employees and is the largest seed company in the European Union. Fort Collins, Colorado, serves as the North American headquarters of Limagrain Cereal Seeds, the newest subsidiary of the Group Limagrain. LCS also has regional research stations in Washington, Indiana, Minnesota and Kansas. For more information visit www.limagraincerealseeds.com.

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