

The following are guidelines for producers participating in the Sod Quality Assurance Program. Please review these procedures prior to beginning production.

### REFERENCES

You should possess and refer to the following references for program requirements, specific sod type requirements and fees related to the program:

- *Standards – Sod Quality Assurance*
- Sod Production Requirements for sod type being grown (e.g. *Production Requirements – MNST-12<sup>TM</sup> Sod*)
- *Fee Schedule – Sod Quality Assurance*
- *Quality Assured Sod Seed Vendor List*

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Minnesota Sod Producers Association (MSPA) and the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) is required for participation in this program. Please contact the MSPA if you have questions on the status of your MSPA membership. **If you are not currently a member of MCIA, complete and submit the Application for Membership form along with the annual membership fee (\$50) to MCIA.**

### STEPS:

#### 1. Submit the Application – Sod Production Site.

This is your request to begin the quality assurance process for your sod production. Complete the application and submit it to MCIA along with:

- Map(s) showing the field location(s)
- Payment for site evaluation inspection (\$100/field – see *Fee Schedule*)

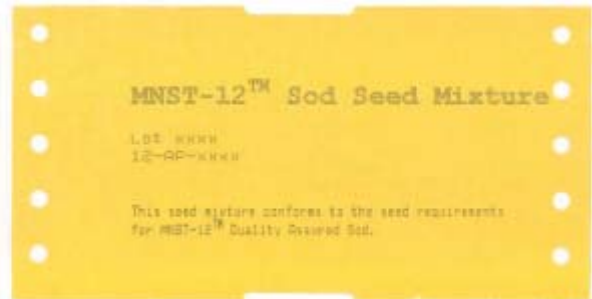
We request that you submit applications at least two weeks prior to seeding if possible.

#### 2. Complete Site Evaluation Inspection

The MCIA field inspector will contact you to schedule the inspection. The inspector will evaluate the field to verify that all vegetation from the previous crop and weedy growth has been destroyed. You will receive an *Inspection Report - Sod Production Site* indicating whether the field has met requirements. If the field does not meet the requirements, you may arrange for a reinspection to verify that the necessary corrections have been made. A reinspection fee will be charged (see *Fee Schedule*).

#### 3. Seed

Seed for sod production must meet the requirements defined for the sod type to be produced (see *Production Requirements – MNST-12<sup>TM</sup> Sod*). In addition to the standard seed label, qualifying seed mixes must bear a gold tag indicating conformity to the seed requirements for the sod type to be produced. **Verify that all seed purchased bears this label.** To obtain qualifying seed, contact one of the approved sod seed vendors from the Quality Assured Sod Seed Vendor List.



#### 4. Seeding the field

Plant the field approved in Step 2 with the approved seed mix at the **required planting rate**. The minimum seeding rate is found in the requirements for the sod type being grown (e.g. *Production Requirements – MNST-12 Sod<sup>TM</sup> = 200 lbs/acre*).

#### 5. Submit Seeding Information

MCIA will provide a *Declaration of Sod Establishment* form to you for each field qualified for sod production in Step 2. Use this form to report seeding information for the field. Attach the following as proof of seed used to establish the field:

- Copy of purchase invoice for seed planted
- One seed label from an empty container of the seed lot planted
- One Gold Tag from an empty container of the seed lot planted

Submit this information to MCIA within two weeks of planting. Retain a copy for your records.

#### 6. Sod Production Management

As you perform your regular sod production practices, be sure to manage your sod production to meet requirements in the following areas:

- **Sod Content**

Sod production must be managed to maintain the mix of species in the sod type planted.

- **Noxious Weeds**

Fields must be free of the following Noxious Weeds as determined under Minnesota Statute sec. 18.78:

Black swallow-wort	Brown knapweed	Canada thistle
Common/European buckthorn	Common reed	Common tansy
Common teasel	Cut-leaved teasel	Dalmatian toadflax
Garlic mustard	Giant hogweed	Glossy buckthorn
Grecian foxglove	Japanese hops	Leafy spurge
Meadow knapweed	Multiflora rose	Narrowleaf bittercress
Oriental bittersweet	Palmer amaranth	Plumeless thistle
Purple loosestrife	Spotted knapweed	Wild parsnip
Yellow starthistle		

- **Objectionable Weeds and Other Crops**

Fields must not contain objectionable species in amounts that exceed defined limits.

Objectionable weed and other crop species and the amounts allowed are defined in the Sod Production Requirements for the sod type being produced (e.g. *Production Requirements – MNST-12<sup>TM</sup> Sod*).

- **Isolation**

Sod production fields must be separated from adjacent sod production and weedy or grassy areas by a minimum of 4 feet (see *Standards – Sod Quality Assurance – section 3.5.1*)

#### 7. Pre-harvest Inspection

Contact MCIA at least two weeks prior to beginning sod harvest to schedule your pre-harvest inspection. The inspector will evaluate the field to determine conformance to requirements as defined in the *Standards – Sod Quality Assurance* (see Section 4) and to the sod production requirements for the sod type you are producing (see *Production Requirements – MNST-12<sup>TM</sup> Sod – section 3*). An *Inspection Report – Pre-harvest Sod Quality Assurance* shall be issued to you for each field inspected. The report will indicate the results of the inspection and whether the field met the requirements. MCIA will bill you for the pre-harvest inspection (see *Fee Schedule*). If the field does not meet the requirements, you may arrange for a reinspection to verify that the necessary corrections have been made. A reinspection fee will be charged (see *Fee Schedule*). Fields (or portions of fields) that do not meet requirements, as indicated on the inspection report, may not be sold as Quality Assured sod.

**8. Sod Quality Assurance Certificates**

Sod Quality Assurance Certificates are issued by MCIA for sod that meets all requirements. **A certificate must accompany each sod shipment and be provided to the buyer at the time of sod delivery.**

Producers with eligible sod production will be provided with instructions for generating certificates. You will be billed a final certification fee and a research and promotion fee for all sod sold (see *Fee Schedule*). The research and promotion fee will allow MTA to fund sod research and promotion activities.

**9. Carryover Production**

Eligibility of qualifying sod production may be maintained from one production year to the next. Each spring, MCIA will send a confirmation listing to producers with qualified production that will permit producers to declare eligible unsold production. A pre-harvest inspection will be required each production year prior to selling additional sod from fields that have been carried over.