



Enhancing Value, Improving Marketability

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COVER CROP SEED - WHAT ARE YOU PLANTING?

Knowing the quality of the cover crop seed you plant is critical to obtaining the results you expect. Just because you are not going to harvest grain from acres planted to cover crops does not mean buying the cheapest seed is your best option.

100 years ago the principles of seed certification were developed to improve the quality and purity of seed being sold to farmers. Today we need to ask if we are going back to the days when price and a good sales job were the primary reason we purchased seed.

Questions to ask when purchasing cover crop seed.

Where did it come from?

Knowing the origin of the seed you plant is important. Introducing herbicide resistant weeds or crops can cause problems that can become very expensive to correct.

Has it been professionally conditioned?

A seed producer/conditioner knows how to store, handle and properly condition seed to remove impurities and maintain germination and quality. Grain dried, mishandled or stored improperly does not make good seed.

Has it been tested for germination and purity?

Cover crop seed, like the corn, soybean and small grains you plant for grain production, should have a current germination and purity test. It is important to know the viability and if there is any other crop or weeds present in the seed you are planting.

Is it properly labeled?

Seed offered for sale must be labeled properly, intended use as a cover crop does not negate these requirements. The label must include the kind, variety, purity, germination, lot identification and labelers name and address. Labeling laws are in place to protect the buyer.

Are you buying cover crop seed from a reputable dealer?

Certified seed is a good place to start and buying from a reputable dealer who holds a Minnesota Seed Permit is essential. An experienced seed supplier, knows how to handle seed, is familiar with the seed law and will be able to answer your questions about the seed you are buying.

Is it being legally sold?

Many varieties are protected under the Plant Variety Protection (PVP) Act and require a license from the variety owner to sell the seed. Certification is often required as well. Buying grain or feed and using it as seed does not eliminate the legal liability. Variety owners do enforce their PVP rights and penalties for violations can be very expensive.

Cutting a few corners and planting the cheapest and most convenient seed available can be costly in the long run.

KNOW WHAT YOU ARE PLANTING!