

ALFALFA

Medicago sativa

Seed Certification Standards in California

GENERAL STANDARDS -- The standards on this sheet are in part condensed and apply to alfalfa. For greater detail and additional provisions, see the General Standards.

PLANTING STOCK -- In most varieties Breeder seed must be planted to produce Foundation seed, and Foundation seed must be planted to produce Certified seed. There is no Registered alfalfa seed production in California.

APPLICATIONS -- should be submitted electronically on CCIA's website (<http://ccia.ucdavis.edu>) as soon as possible and **no later than eight (8) weeks** after planting. New applicants should contact the CCIA office for instructions on obtaining access to the online application system. Applications for perennial crops must be renewed annually and these will be offered on the CCIA website by January 1. These applications should be submitted electronically no later than **February 15**. A choice of 'Renew' means the production field will be used for seed in the current crop season. A 'No Crop' renewal application is chosen if a seed crop will not be produced in the current crop season but the field will remain in the certification program for future seed production. A 'Cancelled' renewal application is chosen if the field will not be used for seed production and will be removed from the certification program.

FIELD ELIGIBILITY -- The land must not have grown alfalfa or had alfalfa planted on it for four (4) years previous for fields producing Foundation seed. For fields producing the Certified class of seed only one (1) year out of alfalfa is required if the previous alfalfa was of the same winter-hardy classification with an intervening irrigated crop, but two (2) years out if not the same winter-hardy classification. Volunteer plants must be destroyed prior to setting seed during each of the previous years required to be out of alfalfa. There can be no **prohibited noxious** weeds in the field. All fields or portions of fields intended for certification must have a definite boundary such as a fence, ditch, roadway, levee, or barren strip at least ten (10) feet wide.

ISOLATION -- Fields or portions of fields for certification must be isolated from alfalfa other than the same variety as follows: The isolation for Foundation seed production shall be 900 feet. Isolation requirements for the Certified class are based on the size of the Certified field and the percentage of the field within 165 feet of another variety of alfalfa. If ten percent (10%) or less of the Certified field is within the 165-foot isolation zone, no isolation is required--only a definite separation. If more than ten percent (10%) of the field is within the isolation zone that part of the field must not be harvested as Certified seed. The isolation strip may contain alfalfa, but if so, it must be the same variety planted with seed eligible to produce certified seed. The strip may be mowed for hay or produce uncertified seed. All isolation strips must have a definite, clearly visible boundary setting off that portion.

AGE OF STAND -- Certified alfalfa seed production is limited to stands not exceeding six (6) years of age. Replanting to thicken a stand or to fill in skips is permitted in row plantings. Replanted areas must be noted on the renewal application and a Foundation seed tag from the planting stock must accompany the renewal application.

FIELD INSPECTION -- Each field intended for certification must be inspected prior to harvest. At least one inspection shall be made preferably during the mid-bloom stage and, in some cases, earlier and later inspections may be made.

Off-types -- Every field should be rogued to remove any plants of another crop or variety, including volunteers. Varieties cannot always be differentiated at field inspection. When differences can be distinguished, the maximum mixture of other varieties, established volunteers, and inseparable other crops permitted is as follows:

Foundation	Certified
1:1000	1:200

Sweet clover shall not exceed ten (10) plants per acre in the Certified class; no sweet clover is allowed in the Foundation class.

Weeds -- Fields must be free of any **prohibited noxious** weeds. **Restricted noxious** weeds and common weeds difficult to separate must be controlled. Prohibited and Restricted noxious weeds are listed in the California Seed Law/CA Code of Regulations/Sections 3854 and 3855.

Fields may be refused certification due to unsatisfactory appearance caused by weeds, poor growth, poor stand, disease, insect damage, and any other condition which prevents accurate inspection or creates doubt as to identity of the variety.

A field inspection report will be sent to the applicant. If the field is approved, a certification number will be assigned. This number must be on all containers of seed before they leave the field. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure his field has been inspected before it is harvested.

HARVESTING -- Harvesting is subject to the supervision of the County Agricultural Commissioner who must be contacted prior to harvest. Any seed moved out of the county for conditioning must be accompanied by an Intercounty Permit or Interstate Transfer issued by the Commissioner.

CONDITIONING AND SAMPLING -- Conditioning of seed for certification may be done only in facilities approved for this purpose by the California Crop Improvement Association. It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine if the plant is eligible before delivering seed for conditioning. Conditioning, sampling, reconditioning, and blending must be supervised by the County Agricultural Commissioner. Conditioning equipment must be free from contaminating seed to the satisfaction of the supervising inspector.

SEED INSPECTION - All seed must be sampled and tested after conditioning and the seed lot must meet or exceed seed certification standards for that crop. A seed lab using the Association of Official Seed Analyst "Rules for Testing" must test the sample. A Registered Seed Technologist must sign each lab analysis. In addition to AOSA rules, specific seed testing may be required to meet CCIA seed certification standards.

The conditioner is required to submit a 1,000 gram sample to the laboratory for analysis and the CCIA dodder test. In some instances, varietal identity cannot be determined by visual seed inspections. Seed must be well screened and graded, bright in color, of good appearance and meet the following standards:

Pure Seed	99.50% (Minimum)
Inert Matter	0.50% (Maximum)
Other Crop Seed	0.10% (Maximum)
Melilotus Species	90 seeds per pound (Maximum)
Sweet Clover	
Foundation	9 seeds per pound (Maximum)
Weed Seed	
Foundation	0.10% (Maximum)
Certified	0.20% (Maximum)
Noxious Weed Seed	None
Germination and Hard Seed	85.00% (Minimum)
To detect the presence of dodder, a 400 gram sample must be run over a velvet roller dodder mill (or similar dodder detection equipment).	

RETAINED SAMPLES – The conditioner must also retain in storage a 1,000 gram sample of each lot certified. These shall be maintained for one year and be made available for any CCIA audits and reference testing.

FINAL CERTIFICATION AND TAGGING -- If the seed sample meets all standards a seed inspection report is issued. Before certification is complete, however, each container must have an official tag or label attached. Certified seed may be sold to a grower in bulk without tagging if a properly filled out Bulk Sale Certificate accompanies the shipment. The tags and Bulk Sale Certificates are issued by the California Crop Improvement Association to the County Agricultural Commissioner who supervises their attachment.

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