



The North Dakota Seed Journal

October 2026

Newsletter of the North Dakota State Seed Department

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The North Dakota Seed Journal is published and edited by the Seed Department, State of North Dakota, under the provisions of Chap. 258, S.L. 1931, as administrative and instrumental matter required for effective transaction of the Department's business and for properly fostering the general welfare of the seed industry in the state.

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Recertification of Carryover Seed

Jason Goltz, Field Seed Program Manager

As winter approaches, this is the time to take stock of inventory and start pulling samples of carryover seed. The germination test is good for nine months so testing in early winter will ensure the seed lot is saleable through planting season; all seed which is carried over should be recertified.

- The cost of the test is \$25-\$30 depending on the crop with a \$10 admin fee.
- Even if the seed isn't expected to sell, recertification means it is ready for those unexpected calls.
- Recertification provides traceability year after year for multi-season carry over.

When sending in carryover seed for recertification, it is important to include the proper form (Recertification Request for Carryover Seed) and a two-pound sample. The two most common problems are incomplete or missing paperwork and insufficient seed.

We provide a range of services and the proper form will tell us which services we are being asked to provide. Often, we will get a sample without the recertification request so it will be entered as a service sample. A sample entered as such will not be assigned a certification number and will not generate bulk certificates. Check your email and online account, a mistake is easier to fix the earlier it is found.

A germination test does not require much seed, but it is best just to fill the envelope. In some cases, we may need to run the test a second time or another test may be requested; the USA Noxious is the most common request to add.

Some partial seed lots may be combined. Before combining lots, they should be recertified because the germination may vary between bins. Once each lot is recertified, then the request for combining lots can be submitted. We will use the lowest germination, the highest percent inert matter and a weighted seed count when combining lots.

When sending samples, it is best to get a tracking number. Whether USPS or any other carrier, it is good to know when the sample may arrive. Samples may be delivered in person either at the front desk during working hours or at the back door entryway outside of working hours.

Recertifying carryover seed early helps you get ahead for sales. The new germination test also can identify seed lots which may be suffering any quality issues in storage. Early recertification also helps us to recertify your seed lots in a timely manner. When the majority of seed lots arrive for testing in the spring there can be delays in results.

Facility Inspections

Ciara Clark, Field Seed Supervisor

Field inspections have wrapped up and we are gearing up for facility inspections. This year countless hours were put into revising our Seed Conditioner and Bulk Retail manuals by the Field Seed staff. Inspectors will be handing out physical copies of the updated versions during facility inspections. As always, it will also be available on our website.

Facility Inspections
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NDSU Dedicates the Bolley Agricultural Laboratory

On August 10th, North Dakota State University cut the ribbon on the Bolley Agricultural Laboratory, a 170,700-square-foot research facility on the western edge of the Fargo campus. The lab is named after, Henry L. Bolley, one of the first faculty members at what was then North Dakota Agricultural College. Bolley served as the first plant pathologist at the state's Agricultural Experiment Station and as the state's first Seed Commissioner. His pioneering work on seed treatment, crop disease and plant breeding helped lay the groundwork for the variety-development programs active today.

The facility serves as a central hub for programs in plant pathology, plant breeding, weed science, agronomy, soil science, and horticulture (formerly housed in 4 other buildings on campus). Crop breeding projects include virtually all crops grown in North Dakota (including cereals such as spring/winter wheat, durum, barley and oat among others), along with potato. The project was made possible through a funding partnership between the North Dakota Legislature, numerous private donors, and agricultural industry partners such as the ND State Seed Commission.

- **Research Areas:** Houses programs in plant pathology, plant breeding, weed science, agronomy, soil science, and horticulture; bringing all disciplines together under one roof.
- **Features:** Includes dedicated spaces for crop variety development, plant science, pathology and horticulture labs. Seed processing areas include coolers and freezers, a drying line, seed cleaning, and storage areas. The facility also include three 10,000-square-foot greenhouses.
- **Funding:** Built through an \$87 million investment from the North Dakota Legislature and \$3.6 million in philanthropic support.

Greg Lardy, NDSU's vice president for agriculture, has described the building as a facility that will "accelerate the rate of progress in delivering the agronomic and plant-breeding solutions North Dakota need to stay competitive in a global marketplace."

"North Dakota's seed producers and seed industry will be positively impacted by the work accomplished in the Bolley Agricultural Laboratory" said Ken Bertsch, ND State Seed Commissioner. "The Seed Commission recognizes the importance of variety development and plant pathology activities on this campus, along with the need to advance those critical programs".

Bertsch continued "The ag industry, and certainly the seed industry, is reliant on variety development from both private and public sources. Producers in the state and region depend on strong public breeding programs to provide improved cereal, pulse, oilseed and potato varieties. I believe, and the Commission agrees, that a balance between private company and public sources of genetics is beneficial to all of ND agriculture."

The Seed Commission provided a \$1,000,000 lead gift to the public fundraising effort at their July, 2023 meeting (Figure 1). The donation was fully funded by monies retained by the Seed Department for the collection of NDSU variety research fees, which the Department has performed under contract with the NDSU Research Foundation for the past twenty years. Those retained funds have now been donated back to the University on behalf of seed growers and crop producers.

Ken Bertsch.....State Seed Commissioner
Adam Winchester.....Director, Potato Program
Jason Goltz.....Field Seed Program Manager
Phillip Aipperspach....Regulatory Program Manager
Jeanna Mueller.....Seed Laboratory Manager
Presley Mosher...Diagnostic Laboratory Mgr, Editor
Starr Thies Business Manager
Robert Sauter.....Potato Program Supervisor
Ciara Clark.....Field Seed Specialist, Asst Editor
Sera Axtman.....Design and Layout

The ND Certified Seed Potato Growers Association also contributed to the public funding effort for the construction of Bolley. The Association donated \$100,000 to potato breeding and pathology related efforts housed in the Laboratory (Figure 2).

"Seed potato production and certification are both critical parts of Seed Department programming and the state's seed industry" said Bertsch. "The footprint of potato-related breeding and pathology research in Bolley is very impressive, and indicative of the importance of potato to ND agriculture".

"These spaces allow us to connect research directly to the needs of producers," added Julie Pasche, Professor and Neil C. Gudmestad Endowed Potato Pathologist. "The work happening here will have an immediate and lasting impact in the field."



Figure 1. Ken Bertsch, ND State Seed Commissioner; Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring, Chairman of Seed Commission. The North Dakota State Seed Commission was recognized for its gift by signage on the main floor of the newly dedicated Bolley Agricultural Laboratory.



Figure 2. Brad Nilson, Johnny Thiele; potato industry members of the Seed Commission. The ND Certified Seed Potato Growers Association were recognized for their gift in support of potato breeding and pathology research at the Bolley Agricultural Laboratory.

Administrative Corner

Starr Thies, Business Manager

Hello, Seed Growers. Many of you should have received a mailing in late July, including forms for annual report of seed sold and variety research fees due. The deadline for these forms was September 1st. If you have not yet submitted your forms, a second final notice will be mailed out by the end of October. It is very important to return these forms to the department even if you have not sold any seed this past year. We need the reports for entry into our system and to prevent you from receiving future mailings. It is also a good time to go over your customer account information and let us know of any address or contact changes.

Facility Inspections

continued from front page

If you have not returned or did not receive your application for your Bulk Retail or Conditioner permit, please get it into the State Seed Department ASAP. If you need a copy of the application, it can be found on the State Seed Department website under Field Seed Forms.

When submitting forms to the Department please check our website to make sure you have the most current form; they are periodically updated. If you are using paper Seed Sampler's Reports make sure that it says (10-2023) in the top left corner. If the forms you have are old, please

ask your inspector for new forms during your inspection or contact our office and we will mail you the most current forms.

If you have any questions pertaining to bulk retail or conditioning facilities or the certified seed process in general, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at cclark@ndseed.ndsu.edu or 701-797-7201.

Testing Reminders

Jeanna Mueller, Seed Lab Manager

As we get into the busy testing season here are a few things we need to remember.

Sample size can vary depending on tests requested and seed size. If only a germination test is requested, we like to receive one pound of seed for most crops to make sure we can retest if needed.

Germination test length:

Most field crops take 7-10 days to complete once arriving in the seed lab. Some native seeds/mixes take longer due to extended germination periods possibly including chill/dormancy breaking procedures. On average, native seeds have a 14-28 day germination period. This is important to know if you have carried over a conservation mix.

Adequate purity sample size:

Small-seeded grasses, white or alsike clover or seeds of similar size (4 oz.)

Sweet clover, red clover, alfalfa, grasses, millet, rape, flax or seeds of similar size (1/2 lb.)

Cereals, soybeans, or seeds of similar size (2 lb.)

Grass mixes (full gallon Ziploc bag), include copy of the seed tag

USA noxious test:

USA noxious tests can be added to any purity to identify if weed seeds found are listed on the US State Noxious Weed Seed List. The USA noxious test is required if

the seed is being sold across state lines. A regular purity (common or certified) will only identify weed seeds found as noxious if they are listed on the ND State Noxious Weed Seed List.

Palmer Amaranth:

Palmer amaranth, identified as a noxious weed in North Dakota along with ten other states, does require genetic testing to verify identification. Visually, an analyst cannot tell the difference between waterhemp, redroot pigweed and Palmer amaranth seed (Figure 1).

If these species are discovered in a certified seed sample, the seed is automatically sent for identification and the sample is failed pending genetic testing. When the species is found in a regulatory sample, a stop sale is issued pending genetic testing. *Amaranthus* species found during a common purity are saved by the analyst during testing; "*Amaranthus* species undetermined" is noted on the Seed Analysis Report and the decision to test the seed is left up to the customer.

Please send your samples in earlier rather than later to receive timely lab results and avoid rush fees. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email us.

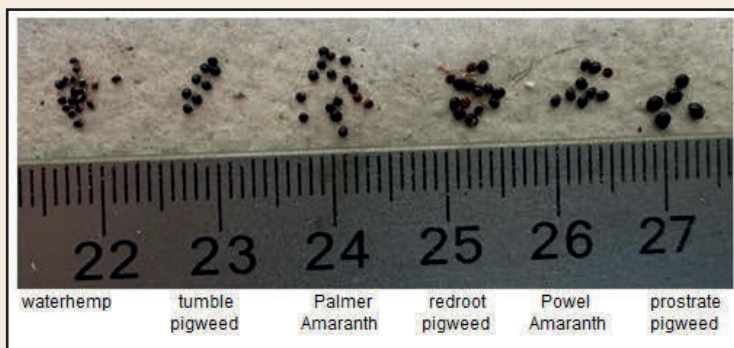


Figure 1. Amaranthus species comparison

Dakota Skarlagen: A Promising Red Variety for North Dakota's Fresh Market

Adam Winchester, Director of Potato Programs

Dakota Skarlagen is the latest red potato variety released by the NDSU Potato Breeding Program under the direction of Dr. Susie Thompson. With its vivid color, strong agronomic traits, and heritage name, this variety is already receiving attention as a top contender in North Dakota's fresh red market.

The name *Dakota Skarlagen* honors the Norwegian settlers of the Red River Valley—“Skarlagen” meaning *scarlet* in Norwegian—a fitting tribute to both the region's history and this potato's striking appearance.

Origins and Breeding Background

Dakota Skarlagen was developed and selected by Dr. Thompson and her team at NDSU from a 2011 cross between Chilean line T10 12 and Dakota Ruby, a 2014 NDSU release. From the beginning, Thompson aimed to create a red variety that combined yield stability and visual appeal for the fresh market.

The selection, first identified as ND113207-1R, was chosen from the seedling nursery at Langdon, ND, in fall 2012. It has since undergone more than a decade of rigorous evaluation within NDSU's breeding pipeline and through trials with cooperating growers.

Agronomic and Market Performance

Field evaluations revealed that Dakota Skarlagen performs particularly well in North Dakota's diverse growing conditions including dryland and irrigated systems. Compared to industry standard Red Norland, Dakota Skarlagen matures about a week later, sets more tubers per plant, and produces tubers with brighter, more uniform red skin. While total yield is comparable to Red Norland, Dakota Skarlagen tends to produce a slightly smaller size profile, reducing the proportion of U.S. No. 1s.

It demonstrated lower susceptibility to silver scurf than Red Norland, though it lacks notable resistance genes. It is moderately susceptible to pink rot, *Pythium* leak, and *Phytophthora nicotianae*, and remains susceptible to Potato Virus Y and bacterial soft rot.

Physical Description

Dakota Skarlagen has medium-to-large vines with an erect growth habit that becomes decumbent at maturity. Tubers are round to oblong in shape, remarkably uniform, and covered in a bright scarlet skin over snowy white flesh. The eyes are shallow, smooth, and evenly spaced—traits that emphasize both consumer appeal and ease of grading during harvest. Tuber uniformity and color retention under storage have been two of its standout qualities across multiple testing years.

Field Impressions and Grower Feedback

Seed grower Camburn Shephard has praised Dakota Skarlagen for its strong field performance and excellent adaptability. “It performs particularly well in heavy soils, with great skin set and color,” he said. “It's a beautiful potato with great yield potential and will fit not only the fresh market but also home gardens.” Shephard added that the variety showed an exceptionally strong root system—surpassing even Dark Red Norland—and has promising potential in dryland production areas.

Seed Availability and Outlook

Tissue culture plantlet of Dakota Skarlagen are maintained within the NDSU Potato Breeding Program, the ND State Seed Department and Valley Tissue Culture. For the 2025 season, over **70 total acres** of seed entered certification in North Dakota and Minnesota—an encouraging sign of grower confidence in this new release.

With its vivid red skin, smooth uniform tubers, and strong regional roots, Dakota Skarlagen represents another success for Dr. Susie Thompson's NDSU breeding program. It blends visual appeal, steady performance, and cultural legacy into one well balanced variety that's poised to carve out a lasting place in the northern red potato market.



Figure 1. The above image, courtesy of grower Camburn Shephard, shows an example of Dakota Skarlagen post-harvest, with its noteworthy bright red color and smooth skin.



ND State Seed Department co-hosts AOSCA Annual Meeting

The North Dakota State Seed Department and South Dakota Crop Improvement Association teamed up to host the AOSCA Annual Meeting, held in Golden, Colorado June 15-18th, 2026. AOSCA agencies from the U.S. and Canada met to review crop standards and discuss certification issues important to member agencies and the seed industry.

ND Commissioner of Agriculture Doug Goehring welcomed the group and shared insights about the agriculture industry at the Monday evening reception. Commissioner Goehring also chairs the ND State Seed Commission and talked about the relationship between the ND Department of Ag and the Seed Department.

Ken Bertsch, ND State Seed Commissioner said "We have a lot of people to thank regarding the annual meeting; our generous sponsors, Commissioner Goehring for taking time out of his schedule to join us in Golden, my co-host Kyle Gustafson and his staff at SD Crop Improvement, and the ND team including ND Crop Improvement, NDSU Foundation seed and our staff at ND State Seed Department for all the effort and financial contributions in making the meeting a success".



Pictured, Left: Ken Bertsch, ND State Seed Commissioner, Dr. Sarah Wilbanks, CEO, AOSCA, Doug Goehring, ND Agriculture Commissioner and Chairman of ND State Seed Commission. Right: Attendees of the 2026 AOSCA Annual Meeting socialize at the Welcome Reception.

Thank you, Sponsors



"Service is our Specialty"

Phillip Aipperspach, Regulatory Program Manager

As we close another busy summer season, the work turns indoors. Paperwork takes center stage, and it can feel like the snow will never melt. Winter also brings regulatory season, not always the most popular arm of the North Dakota State Seed Department. Regulatory is not something most people look forward to, but we are here to help. Visits can start in January and run into April. A few reminders now will help us help you.

The thing most people associate with these visits is pulling regulatory samples. Sampling is a foundation of the program, and is built as a service to you. We rarely find problems in the samples we pull. When we do, one cause shows up more than the others: residue left in the bin. Dirty or unclean bins can contaminate a sample and make a clean lot look worse than it is. Look the bin over before you fill it and make sure it's free of old seed and residue. The two places we sample most often are the bin sample ports and, if needed, the bottom bin chute. Those are also the spots where residue is left most often, and that residue can throw off the sample.

Seed production moves fast. Labeling rules, testing requirements, and intellectual property provisions are easy to fall behind on. Keeping up with those is the main job of the regulatory program. Part of that job is educating and guiding labelers through the process of getting seed ready for market. If you are unsure about a label, a test, a permit, or what you can do with a protected variety, ask before the seed is offered for sale. That is the easiest time for us to help.

As you finish harvest, clean out bins, produce labels, and get seed tested, keep your questions in mind. A question asked now, or during a visit in January, will save time and effort when it is time to move seed in the spring. Call or email the regulatory office, or ask your inspector, if you are unsure about labeling, testing, permits, or what can legally be done with a variety you produced. We are happy to walk you through it so everything moves smoothly when another busy planting season comes around.

North Dakota State Seed Department

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NDSSD Calendar

Nov 11 Veterans Day observed, office closed

Nov 26 Thanksgiving, office closed

Dec 8 NDCISA Western Regional meeting, Williston

Dec 9 NDCISA Eastern Regional meeting, Grand Forks

Dec 25 Christmas Day, office closed

Jan 1 New Year's Day, office closed

Jan 18-19 Association of North Dakota Agribusiness (ANDA) Agribusiness
Showcase, Fargo