

South Australian
Seed Certification Scheme

**Procedures and Standards
Manual**

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Authors

Peter Smith, Manager, Seed Services
Lyn Baxter, Project Officer, Seed Services

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PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS FOR THE S.A. SEED CERTIFICATION SCHEME

1. INTRODUCTION

Primary Industries & Resources South Australia (PIRSA) Seed Services operates an official seed certification scheme based on the Rules and Directives of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Seed Schemes and the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA). The S.A. Seed Certification Scheme is provided by PIRSA on a voluntary basis, as there are no parliamentary acts or regulations governing its operation. Service fees applied by PIRSA are based on full cost recovery and user pays principles; and are reviewed annually. Published fee schedules are available from Seed Services or may be viewed or printed from Seed Services' website at www.pir.sa.gov.au/seeds.

The S.A. Seed Certification Scheme aims at providing the consumer with seed of high varietal or *genetic* purity but gives no guarantee of this other than to certify that an acceptable procedure, based on internationally recognised standards and accreditation protocols, have been followed to achieve this goal.

The seed certification process ensures that the *genetic* identity of a plant cultivar is maintained during multiplication so that plants grown from certified seed can be expected to look and perform in the way the breeder originally described. This means users of certified seed can be confident that their business will benefit from the expected advantages of a cultivar. Important genetic characteristics include:

- seedling vigour
- insect resistance
- disease resistance
- cold season productivity
- high seed yield
- non seed shattering
- specific grain or seed qualities

To provide consumers with seed of acceptable *physical* quality, the S.A. Seed Certification Scheme also applies minimum national seed physical standards - as determined by industry. Physical quality standards relate to:

- physical purity (that is, the amount of pure seed compared to broken or cracked seed, chaff, straw, dirt, sticks or stones)
- germination capacity
- other crop seeds
- weed seeds

Seed certified by PIRSA under the umbrella of the OECD Seed Schemes is eligible to compete globally for seed sales to OECD and EU countries. These markets currently consume some 50% of the certified seed produced in South Australia.