ODA Seed Testing Program

Cover crops are popular to improve soil health and supply other services such as improve water infiltration, reduce phosphorus runoff, leaching, and provide grazing or harvested forage. Demand for cover crop seed is therefore on the rise. Farmers have different options – the most secure method is to buy cover crop seed from a seed company. Companies provide assurance of the variety you use and publish purity and germination on the seed label. However, farmers may choose to use bin-run seed from their own or from another farm.

If you are participating in a USDA or ODA cover crop cost-share program and use bin run seed, the seed <u>must</u> be tested for purity, germination, weed seed, and Ohio noxious weeds prior to seeding the cover crop to meet program requirements. Bin run samples with test results showing noxious weed seed is present, must be cleaned and resampled prior to seeding.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture will test any cover crop seed for noxious weed seed content **free of charge anytime of the year.** For germination and purity testing ODA provides these tests free of charge between June 1 and December 31st. Samples received outside of these dates will be charged accordingly for germination and purity testing. It is important to provide samples early to ODA to allow tests to be completed before planting date. Sample turnaround time can take up to 21 days, tests must be submitted well in advance of planned seeding date and results must be received before planting.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture's seed testing program provides farmers with results for germination, purity, weed seed, and noxious weed seeds. To get seed tested contact ODA Plant Health Division (614) 728-6410.

While bin-run seed can be used on your own farm without a problem, you must follow Ohio laws regarding seed sales. If you sell seed to another farmer, you become a seed distributor and you must apply for a seed license, the cost of which is $10 per calendar year. In addition, you are required to complete a germination/purity test done by a seed lab and you must properly label the seed that you sell. If you have any questions, contact ODA Plant Health (614) 728-6410.