



Fresno County *Seed Crop Notes*

University of California Cooperative Extension

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Reminder! Inspect Your Equipment Before You Begin Harvesting

Just as you must have your crop inspected to insure the identity and genetic purity of improved varieties, you must have your equipment inspected before you begin harvesting in order to prevent mixing or contaminating seed lots.

Certification in California has always been a cooperative effort between the University (represented by the experiment station and the farm advisors), County Agricultural Commissioners, and the California Crop Improvement Association (the seed growers and handlers). Until about 1950, all harvesters and cleaning plants were inspected by the agricultural commissioners' inspectors. In the 1950's, alfalfa seed production went from nothing to over 100,000 acres. The inspection of all harvesters and cleaning plants by the agricultural commissioner became extremely time consuming and all the major seed producing counties had to begin charging for this service.

Because of the pressure of Proposition 13 on county income and the workload put on the agricultural commissioner by the new pesticide programs, it is now impossible for commissioners to inspect every harvester. Therefore, the responsibility for cleaning and inspecting harvesters has been placed on the seed growers themselves. The agricultural commissioner continues to play an important role in the program, since notification of intention to harvest must still be recorded before proceeding.

When you are ready to begin harvesting, notify the county agricultural commissioner's office and report the following information:

- Name of the applicant
- Variety & Certification Number
- Location of the field
- Anticipated harvest date
- That all harvesters & trucks have been cleaned
- Name of the person who inspected the harvester
- Where the seed is going for storage or conditioning

(Note: If the seed will be stored or conditioned out of the county, request an Intercounty Permit.)

Do Not Begin Harvesting Until You Are Told to Proceed by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office! When the ag commissioner gets this report, it is recorded in the applicant's file. The applicant's file is also checked to make sure the field has been inspected and passed, and whether there are any problems which have to be checked at harvest, such as isolation or noxious weed areas. In most cases, with experienced growers the Ag Commissioner needs only the record of the call to notify them that the harvesters were clean. However, the commissioner can and will make spot checks, and will check new growers' equipment, so never start to harvest without permission from the ag commissioner.

For fields producing Foundation or Registered seed, harvesters must be cleaned to where only an occasional seed is found. For fields producing Certified seed, equipment must be blown or swept off, run dry with all boots open, and all augers, bins and other places where any amount of seed could accumulate must be cleaned out.