

Certification from the National Viewpoint

By Richard Bingham

"Thanks, Charlie.

"I am going to try to limit my remarks to problems that are of more general scope **across the** country and in Canada in relation to seed certification. I'm sure that my fellow panelists, right and left, will spell out for you in much more detail some of the mechanics of seed certification under two different **conditions**, both with the same objectives. I'm going to principally outline for you what the Society of American Foresters Committee on Forestry Improvements and the subcommittee they're under on seed certification, has determined are the wants of you people in seed certification. There are several people in this room who **have** answered a recent questionnaire telling us what they think they want in the way of seed certification. I'm going to cover very briefly the present Federal laws and the State seed laws which now affect seed certification. I'm going to try to spell out for you immediately, right now, what are some of the practical aspects of **seed** certification and on what basis some standards will fall. I'll begin right there. I know in any audience I've been talking to about seed certification, the immediate thing that rises to the minds of a great many of the audience is the complication **and** mechanics of seed certification. The cost that's **going** to be added on to each pound of seed in respect to the total cost of the seed. Well, let's look at this thing **in a** common sense fashion, if we can. What do you pay per pound for Douglas-fir this year, Charlie?" (This was a question to Charlie Rindt.) "Well, the year that just passed, it averaged \$13.00."

"Well, let's look at what we could do with 25 cents a pound and **\$1 a pound** added on to the cost of Charlie's Douglas-fir seed **in** respect to seed **certification**. Let's work with a **small lot from** a relatively small area. Perhaps a 500 pound seed lot and let's take our \$1 charge for certification and give ourselves a \$500 ante with which we can certify that seed. If the ante is that liberal, I think you can see with **that \$500** total seed certification cost, we can put a man in the field for about ten days at the cost of about \$50 a day. With the 25 cents fee, we can put him in the field for two and **a half days**. Let's look at it and think of it in that way. He can tail the seed collectors around. He **can tail** the lot through the seed extractory, etc. Actually, for a relatively cheap price, **we can** buy quite a bit of inspection work on the ground-- ten days at \$1 a pound **on** 500 pound lots, two and a half days at the rate of 25 cents a pound **on the same** size lot.

'Now to jump over into seed laws, briefly, as they affect the **seed** certification in this country and Canada. The present **status of** international seed laws--I think you could say, in a word, that there are none. With respect to the present **status of** Federal seed laws

in the U. S., covering forestry seed, we can repeat that **statement**.

At the present, **there** are none. However, in this field **in** this region, for Federal certification, there have been in the past several attempts to have forestry seed blanketed in under the **so-called** Federal Seed Act. The effect of this blanketing would have been principally to restrict the use of the term "certified" in respect to seed to those **lots which** were actually approved by an officially recognized State seed certification agency.

"Now in respect to State seed laws. At **present**, there are three or four states which have seed acts encompassing forestry seed practically complete or already completed. John **Barber will speak-**, I think, **in** some detail of the present Georgia State seed act. Under these state seed acts, it's interesting to note that there is almost any pathway **in** the delegation of authority for seed certification. **In** the case of John's Georgia seed certification organization, the pathway of certification authority **is**, I think, through the Dean of the College of Agriculture. It is delegated again to the local State Crop Improvement Association which is a member association **in** the International Crop Improvement Association. It is passed eventually, as far as the teeth of the certification are concerned, **down** to a tree seed committee operating within the fabric of the State Seed Certification Organization. John Cameron will, I think, tell you about another plan which is entirely different. In your state unless you already have a state seed law, which designates the seed certification agency which will administer certification **in** your state, you can follow almost any pathway you desire. Now this holds for all eleven Western States at present. You can go down through the Department of Agriculture. The head of the Department of Agriculture in the state can delegate authority to his own seed branch. This is the case **in** the State of Washington with agricultural seed. You can delegate authority for certification **of** certain crops within the state to certain divisions. In Washington, horticultural seeds are certified by the Horticultural Division. All crop seeds excluding cereals are certified by the State Seed Division under the Director of Agriculture. On the other hand, recognizing the superiority **of the ICIA**, International Crop Improvement member association in Washington has delegated the authority for certifying cereal seed to the local branch of the ICIA. **Those fellows** all operate in each **other's** pockets. Two of them are in the same office over in Yakima, Washington. So you have almost any pathway. If you insist, as many foresters do, on certification by **foresters**, for **foresters**, you can go **down through the Dean of the College of Forestry**. You can go down through the State Forester, or you can go down through any nonprofit organization of foresters to **accomplish your aims**. So, don't be **frightened** by the legal aspects of seed certification at this time. **Keep tabs on them in** your state and design the type of seed certification organizations you want. It's all out **in** front of us and we can go **anywhere we want**.

"Now, to get over to the questionnaire. This questionnaire was circulated as a result of controversy<sup>y</sup> arising over the general applicability of the present International Crop Improvement

Association, minimum forest tree seed standards, its applicability outside the South, and generally throughout the U. S. and Canada. The controversy has already been mentioned by Charlie and there are very few controversies left. We've found, as Charlie mentioned, that we're **talking** about two different things. We are coming closer and closer together. Our committee has been invited by the Board of Directors and by the president of ICIA to submit our recommendations based on your answers to this questionnaire. Here's what you told us, in a few words. There is very general agreement among 98 percent of the voters that we need forest tree seed certification sometime in the next ten or twenty years, at the very latest. Ninety-five voters returned the questionnaires, out of 125 questionnaires sent out. Within those, about 50 percent of the people who voted were equally represented from the South, Southeast, Northeast, Lake States, Central States, Western States, Southwest and **Canada**. About 50 percent of those people thought that the certification problem was with us today. It is right here and we'd better get after it.

'In respect to the legal aspects of certification and the type of certification organization desired, there was a pretty overwhelming opinion in favor of certification through some nonprofit organization rather than through a Federal or State or Governmental mandatory seed certification authority. It's perfectly O.K. for Al (Bamford) to put out his standards as they apply to collection of seed in British Columbia. But please, let the rest of us stand together and form our own nonprofit organization with our own internal control. The present opinion of most voters across the country is that the simplest and most direct path toward certification will probably be through the ICIA. However, in respect to

this point, it's very interesting to see that where another plausible, suitable seed certification authority was available. About half the voters favor another type of certification organization. I'm speaking here of the West Coast group--Jack Cameron's group, Charlie Rindt's group, and my own. I might mention that in most cases, the path of least resistance towards certification, at present, is through the ICIA. They have already established minimum seed certification standards. On review and revision these will be much more applicable, we hope, to all the states and to Canada. In respect to the type of information you wanted certified, just about 100 percent of the voters wanted taxonomic identification of the material certified. If it reached down to the case where there are varieties of trees, in a sense, local problems and sources of the trees, about 100 percent of the voters wanted this. There's a high level called for. Excuse me--about 50 percent of the voters want to take it clear down to variety and cultivar if there were such. One hundred percent of the voters--and this is very important in respect to what Charlie Rindt mentioned--about 100 percent of the voters wanted the geographic seed source pretty well pinpointed. There's a general realization

now, across the country, of the problem that Charlie mentioned. That is that the bulk of the seed moving in the forestry seed trade between states, internationally, even within states, of course, (I don't mean to trespass here) is wild tree seed. One of the greatest problems today is the Certification of the origin of that seed, to avoid the mistake that Charlie Rindt mentioned. Just to keep the tape fouled up, Monk, I've got 'a remark to make here. These trees simply won't drop their genes for you. You've got to understand them, test them, know them. About 85 percent of the people actually wanted to certify the source of specific stands and seed production areas, seed orchards, and individual trees and clones, right down to that point where the knowledge and material was available. And 95 percent of the voters wanted elevational source certified. About 65 percent of those who voted for it wanted it specified within about a 500 foot range. About 30 percent voted for holding the elevation brackets down to 100 feet. This certainly wouldn't be applicable in a broad collection area. You'd run into some difficulties. Nevertheless, people across the country want these things spelled out. Ninety-two percent wanted the standard germination test available and practically all, 98 percent or 100 percent, wanted the seller's name and the collector's name spelled out on the tag. Getting down to the present ICIA minimum standards, there were several major breakdowns in those standards. These related to field standards, seed or quality standards, etc. Generally, across the country, I should say, we didn't so much find fault with those four major parts of the ICIA minimum standards, but, we did find we need a revision to make them more generally applicable to seed on a countrywide basis. Some of the important things were, right off the bat, of course, that we needed a classification of seed to handle wild seed certified as to origin. We want origin-certified seed which the present standards do not' cover. In respect to some of the collection criteria, this is in connection with policing certification, quite a few people thought that it was plausible to carry on a series of inspections. This would include a precollection inspection, certifying that the crop actually was on the trees, followed by an inspection after collection to certify that in fact the cones had been picked- -at least they've disappeared from that area. And there were various lower percentages of people desiring other check points along the lines of collection toward certification below that point. From some of the terminology in the present minimum standards, the seed classes, we find out that all of us are actually thinking pretty much along the same lines. We want to certify genetically improved material of class one or Class A. We want to certify wild material from improved stands. We want to certify wild seed itself. And in almost all of the state standards which you look at today and in the standards of the West Coast Seed Certifying Authority you will find a very similar breakdown in more or less detail spelling out the subclasses that Alf wants. There is a general requirement, however, for simplification of these classes. In other words, most of the people would rather have Alf classify his seed as Class A, B, and C, and let the particular

buyer or seller carry on with the subclasses within them. We don't want too much complication from the nurseryman's standpoint or from the buyer to seller standpoint across the country. Well, this sums up pretty well what I had to say, Charlie. Thank you."

Panel Chairman Charlie Rindt then introduced Jack Cameron as follows:

"I would like to have Jack Cameron of the Manning Seed Company who is **one of our big seed** suppliers talk about certification from the seller's **viewpoint**. I **guess** most of you know the commercial seed business, something about it, here in the Northwest. But for those of you who do not, the Manning **Seed Company** is certainly not the only seed company operating up here. There are a number of others and there are more coming into the business every year. There is a lot of competition among them and when we put out bids for large quantities of seed, there is very careful calculation on the part of everyone as to what that seed is going to cost and what they can sell it for. The requirement for certification is, of course, a factor in what this seed is going to cost when it is sold to us.

"In setting up certification, we want to make certain that whoever is set up as a responsible certifying authority is going to handle it in such a way that there is not going to be room for unscrupulous fly-by-night seed dealers to come in and undercut people who are trying to do, and who have over the years been doing, a good honest job of giving us what we want. And this is another little angle of the whole thing that I'd like to have everyone bear in mind."