

UNIFORMITY FOR GRASS SEED LABELING

15-Month Test Period and "Sell By" Dating for Cool Season Grass Seed

What is cool season grass seed?

Cool season grass examples:

- Kentucky bluegrass, red fescue, chewings fescue, hard fescue, tall fescue, perennial ryegrass, intermediate ryegrass, annual ryegrass, colonial bentgrass, creeping bentgrass and mixtures thereof commonly used on home lawns

Why do states need a 15-month test period for Cool Season Grass Seed?

State laws governing seed testing need to become more consistent:

- Current testing periods among the states vary from 7 months to 18 months
- 29 states have changed their seed laws to at least the recommended 15-month test period
- Shorter test periods are more labor intensive and costly for seed officials and retailers

Why is a 15-month Test Period for Cool Season Grass Seed ok?

Research has documented 15-month testing does not diminish quality of seed sold:

- The Association of American Seed Control Officials (AASCO) changed their model code RUSSEL (Recommended Uniform State Seed Law) in 2002 to permit a 15-month test period for cool season grass seed
- The Federal Seed Act also regulates according to a 15-month testing period

What is a "Sell By" System and why add it?

RUSSEL recommends that states uniformly adopt a "SELL BY" concept for seed:

- "Test period" labels are confusing for consumers who do not know the shelf life for grass seed
- Consumers understand "SELL BY" as it is used in many consumer products like milk, eggs, etc.

Who benefits from the change?

Everyone will benefit:

- **Consumers** get easy to read labels and understand when a product is "expired"
- **Seed Officials** save funds by reducing unnecessary stop sale orders and follow-up inspections
- **Retailers** have less regulatory burden, additional selling time, and reduced labor costs

