

Properly Labeled Hemp Seed in Connecticut

CT Department of Agriculture – Regulatory Services

The following is an in-depth description of seed label components, with reference to the seed label example. This list follows the Connecticut State Seed law.

1: Product name

The name often includes the Kind and Brand and sometimes the variety. There are often descriptive terms used to help the consumer make decisions on which type of seed to get. For example, the name might include "CBD" or "for fiber use." If the seed is a mix it must be stated, and most companies put it here.

2: Lot number

All seed sold must have a lot number. This number can arbitrarily be determined by the company. Some companies choose unique numbers for each lot and some use the same number for multiple lots.

3: Variety/ Kind

The kind of seed has to be stated on the seed tag. According to the USDA the kind should be listed separately from the descriptive terms: example; Soft Red Winter Wheat, is a description of the kind, with Wheat being the kind. The variety has to be stated or "variety not stated" can be used. The abbreviation "VNS" is not allowed in every state. The USDA does not allow the use of "VNS" in interstate shipments of seed.

4: Pure Seed

A lot of seed is made out of pure seed components, pure seed unit, other crop and weed seeds. All of the seed components percentages including inert matter must add up to 100%. The pure seed components are done by percentage of weight. According to AOSA Rules for Testing Seeds, a pure seed is "fifty percent of the seed still regardless if an embryo is present."

5: Other Crop seed

There is a tolerance for other seeds being in a seed lot. A 100% pure seed sample is unlikely so there is space to claim other agricultural crop seeds. Other agricultural or turf seeds can be claimed by weight percentage found. If the other agricultural crop seed component found makes up for 5% of the sample, it must be claimed as a component on the label, and the term blend or mixture must be added, according to the state's rules.

6: Inert Matter

Inert matter is anything in the lot that is not a seed, or seeds that will not grow such as ergotized seed. Every seed lot will contain inert matter and should be added to the label by percentage of weight.

7: Weed Seeds

Weed seeds just like other crops must be claimed. There is a tolerance to the number of weeds in a sample. Each state has its own tolerance and one should look into the state seed law before selling seeds into that state. This percentage is also calculated by weight.

8: Noxious Weed Seeds

Noxious weed seeds are a state by state list of economically hazardous weeds. The list is divided into two categories, restricted and prohibited. Any restricted weeds must be claimed on the label and how many seeds can be found per pound of seed. No prohibited seeds can be claimed because they should not be sold in the states where they are prohibited. If no noxious weeds are found, then the statement, "none found" can be used.

9: Labeler

The labeler is the company that provides the seed. The labeler and labeler's address must be listed on every seed tag.

10: Disclaimer

If the seed is treated then the statement "Do not use for food, feed or oil purposes" must be used.

11: Seed Treatments

If the seed is treated it must be dyed a color that makes it distinguishable from other seed. The tag must include the name of the treatment used on the seed, and an additional tag can be used stating the active ingredients and the hazards associated with the chemicals. No pesticides or seed treatments have been approved for use on hemp at the federal or state levels yet.

12: Germination dates

A test date, the month and year the test to determine the germination % was completed, must be included on the label for the germination test. Some states might require a sell date, so one must look into the state's seed law they plan on selling into.

13: Origin

The origin of where the seed was grown if listed on the label must not be misleading for each pure seed component.⁹

14: Germination

The germination rate for the seed must be included on the label for agricultural seed. The percentage has to be a whole number.

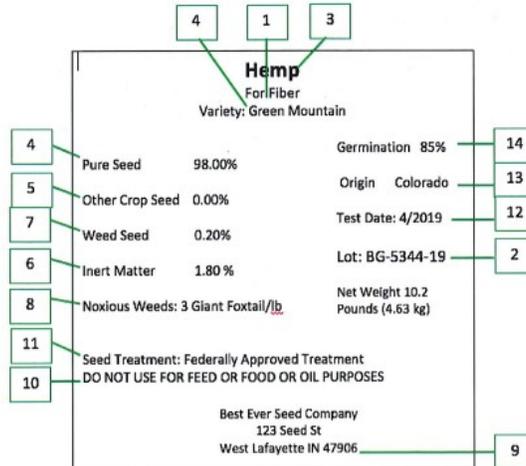


Fig. 1 - Example of a hemp seed label following the FSA

Each seed tag or label can have a different layout but must contain the same basic information. A seed tag or label should be found on any seed sold, advertised, or transported with intent to plant in the United States⁹. Different states have different seed laws so labels will require different information based on the state they are sold in. For an example, some states allow brand names on labels while others do not. Even with differences the seed label will tell purchasers what type of seed they will be buying, the variety and the quality of seed with purity and germination information. If there is any concern or questions about a seed label contact your state's seed lab.

Sources:

1. Kaiser Jerry. Reading Seed Packaging Labels (Seed Tags.) Agronomy Technical Note. February 2010. https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs144p2_010411.pdf
2. Robison Don. How to Read a Seed Label- What has to be on a Seed Label, OISC. 2017. https://www.oisc.purdue.edu/seed/pdf/how_to_read_a_seed_tag.pdf
3. A Simplified Guide Understanding Seed Labels. NRCS Plant Materials Program. August 2007. https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_PLANT_MATERIALS/publications/mdpmctn7615.pdf
4. AASCO <http://www.seedcontrol.org/>
5. Agricultural Products. April 3rd 2019. IC 15-15 <https://www.oisc.purdue.edu/seed/pdf/15-15-1.pdf>
6. American Seed Trade Association, the State. <https://www.betterseed.org/the-issues/state/>

7. AOSA Seed Testing Definitions Section III Purity Analysis. <https://www.analyzeseeds.com/seed-testing-definitions>
8. Federal Seed Act. USDA. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/fsa>
9. RUSSL. AASCO. <https://www.oisc.purdue.edu/seed/pdf/russl.pdf>
10. National Conference of State Legislatures. "State Industrial Hemp Statutes."
<http://www.ncsl.org/research/agriculture-and-rural-development/state-industrial-hempstatutes.aspx>

Updated July 31, 2019