

Seed Industry Announces New Palmer Amaranth Test

Alexandria, Va.—January 30, 2017—Weed seed can be spread in a variety of ways—including by air, animals, rain, soil and mechanical means. In a recent survey, the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) identified palmer amaranth (PA) as a very problematic weed in many parts of the country. To prevent PA from entering the professional seed supply, the native seed industry has been working closely with the scientific community on the development and validation of a rapid DNA test to identify PA.

“This new test will provide companies and their customers with an additional tool to ensure purity,” said ASTA President & CEO Andy LaVigne. “The American Seed Trade Association’s membership includes native seed producers with generations of experience who deliver professionally produced, quality seed to their customers. There’s a lot involved in producing the best seed for the best results.”

Developed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture and Eurofins BioDiagnostics, with support from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Plant Protection Division Seed Program, the independently validated DNA sequencing method differentiates PA from other amaranth and weed species. While still available on a limited basis, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Seed Unit recently announced it will accept the test for labeling purposes, as PA has been declared a prohibited noxious weed in the state. Although not designated as a noxious weed in any states other than Ohio and Minnesota, ASTA is taking steps to keep this troublesome weed out of seed sources. In addition to the DNA test, seed producers may also use a growout method from Illinois Crop Improvement Association to evaluate whether weed seeds are PA.

Professional seed suppliers have always taken great care in managing seed production to reduce the presence of diseases, pests and weeds. This includes field preparation and field inspections throughout the growing process; properly cleaning seed using state of the art equipment to maintain quality and performance; and testing to ensure high-quality performance standards are met. They must also comply with federal and state requirements for seed purity and germination, and these results must be on the seed tag. Industry Best Management Practices for Native Seed production can be found [here](#). Click [here](#) for more information on environmental and conservation seed, including a [list](#) of professional seed suppliers in each region.

Farmers who have identified PA in fields or conservation plantings are urged to contact their seed supplier, and local Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency or Extension professional.

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Founded in 1883, the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) represents over 700 companies involved in seed production, plant breeding and related industries in North America. ASTA is an effective voice of action in all matters concerning the development, marketing and movement of seed, associated products and services throughout the world. ASTA's broad membership offers varieties from alfalfa to zucchini and all production types including conventional, organic and biotech. We promote the development of better seed to produce better crops for a better quality of life.