



Seed Regulatory and Testing Division Fall 2023



ITEMS OF INTEREST IN SEED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Recent and Upcoming Activities.....1
- State Seed Regulators Quarterly Meeting.....1
- Federal Seed Act Cases Settled2
- SRTD Donates to Feds Feeds Families.....2
- Mucilage on Basil Seeds.....2
- Calendar of Events3

RECENT AND UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

SRTD’S VIST TO ARKANSAS ENHANCES COOPERATIVE SEED ACT AGREEMENTS

On August 17, S&T Deputy Administrator Ruihong Guo and SRTD Director Ernest Allen met with the Deputy Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Cynthia Edwards, and Arkansas seed control officials to discuss the State’s Cooperative Agreement with AMS. The discussion involved seed testing, State and Federal seed regulatory processes, and the importance of uniform application of the Federal Seed Act throughout the United States. The meeting concluded with an agreement to work together to increase cooperative activities including FSA sampling throughout the State.

SRTD PRESENTS TO SEED INNOVATION AND PROTECTION ALLIANCE

On September 26, SRTD staff presented to the Seed Innovation and Protection Alliance on the Federal Seed Act labeling requirements. Approximately 54 seed industry professionals from around the country attended the presentation. It focused on key considerations when labeling for seed sold to growers and dealers. After the presentation, SRTD answered several questions involving misconceptions around shipping seed in interstate commerce.

SRTD PRESENTS AT AMERICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION MEETING

On October 31, Plant Physiologist Yujia Wu and SRTD Director Ernest Allen were invited to speak at the American Seed Trade Association’s Forage, Turf, and Conservation meeting in Kansas City, MO. They updated the grass seed industry on AMS enforcement activities and outreach related to the nationwide Kentucky 31 Tall Fescue contamination issue that was first reported in 2017. In addition, they introduced a new method, developed by AMS, to distinguish Kentucky 31 from other varieties of Tall Fescue. Benefits of the method include reduced overall cost and faster results. The update was well received by the attendees.

STATE SEED REGULATORS QUARTERLY MEETING

The Seed Regulatory and Testing Division (SRTD) conducts regional quarterly virtual meetings with State Seed Control Officials (SCO). The goal of the meetings is to promote better communication and working relationships with SCO’s and discuss current industry issues. Topics from the most recent meetings included: Winfred annual/winter rape seed labeling, labeling with two addresses, Kentucky 31 tall fescue update, confidentiality of AMS Numbers, staffing changes, and noxious-weed seed updates.

Several members of SRTD are in attendance to provide their expertise to any questions from SCOs. These members include the SRTD Director, Laboratory Supervisor, OECD Seed Schemes Program Manager, and other key staff. In addition, each member of the Regulatory team is in attendance for every meeting.

For more information regarding this article, contact Seed Marketing Specialist Kevin Robinson (704) 810-7264; kevin.robinson2@usda.gov.

FEDERAL SEED ACT CASES SETTLED

The Federal Seed Act (FSA) provides the authority for the regulation of the interstate shipments of agricultural and vegetable seeds. The FSA requires that seed shipped in interstate commerce are labeled with certain information necessary for the seed buyer to make an informed choice. The labeling information and any advertisements pertaining to the seed must be truthful. Between September 1, 2022, and August 31, 2023, a total of 17 seed companies paid \$49,975 to settle alleged violations of the FSA. For specific information regarding these violations, please visit [Federal Seed Act Cases Settled | Agricultural Marketing Service \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/AMSIS/seed/FederalSeedActCasesSettled).

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) administers the FSA by leveraging its resources with State departments of agriculture. These investigations were a result of joint efforts with seed regulatory officials in Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. By working collaboratively with State partners, the Seed Regulatory and Testing Division helps promote uniformity among State seed laws and fair competition within the seed trade through the enforcement of the FSA.

For more information regarding this article, contact Seed Marketing Specialist Kevin Robinson (704) 810-7264; kevin.robinson2@usda.gov.

SEED DIVISION DONATES 12,560 POUNDS OF TOMATOES IN SUPPORT OF USDA'S FEDS FEED FAMILIES

In cooperation with the Society of St. Andrew nonprofit organization, SRTD harvested over 12,560 pounds of various types of tomato at North Carolina Department of Agriculture's Piedmont Research Station. They were donated to several food banks in North Carolina including Loaves &

Fishes and Smallwood PC pantry. These are nonprofit community service organizations that provide supplemental food assistance and other outreach activities for those in need. The tomatoes were donated as part of the USDA's Feds Feed Families campaign, which strives to help our neighbors in need.

The tomatoes were grown as part of the True-ness-to-Variety program which tests various types of agricultural and vegetable crops each year to verify that seeds being sold in the United States are accurately labeled. This practice helps to ensure that businesses, farmers, and home gardeners get the products that they expect in seed packets.



Tomatoes donated to the Feds Feeds Family Campaign (Yujia Wu AMS SRTD 2023)

For more information regarding this article, contact Plant Physiologist Dr. Yujia Wu (704) 810-7267; yujia.wu@usda.gov.

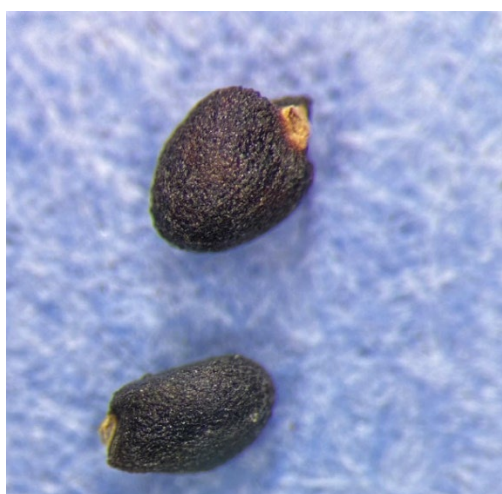
MUCILAGE ON BASIL SEEDS

Some species of basil (*Ocimum* spp.) can produce a layer of mucilage around the seed coat after hydration. Basil is an annual herb in the Lamiaceae family and native to tropical regions of Africa and Asia.

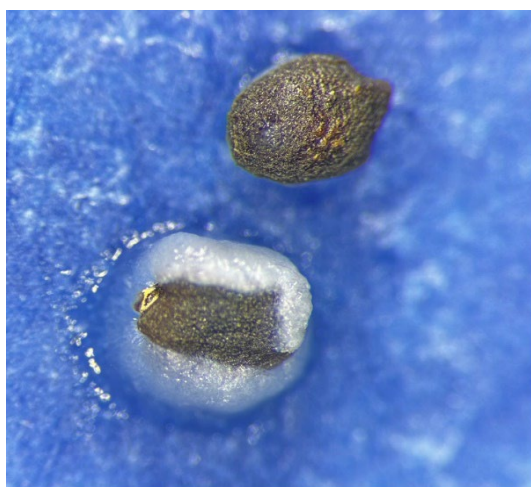
Plant mucilage is produced by many different species in different plant tissues, such as the leaves of aloe vera. Seed mucilage is composed of pectins and hemicellulose found in the perisperm. It is thought to help the seed retain moisture for germination and help lubricate roots as they grow through soil.

A study from Virginia Tech University tested if mucilage influenced germination rates on basil seeds. The experiment compared seeds that were left with mucilage and seeds where the mucilage was removed. In a laboratory setting, where seeds were planted on paper towels and placed in ideal temperature and humidity, the germination rates were the same. However, when grown in soil the germination rates were higher for seeds with the mucilage left intact.

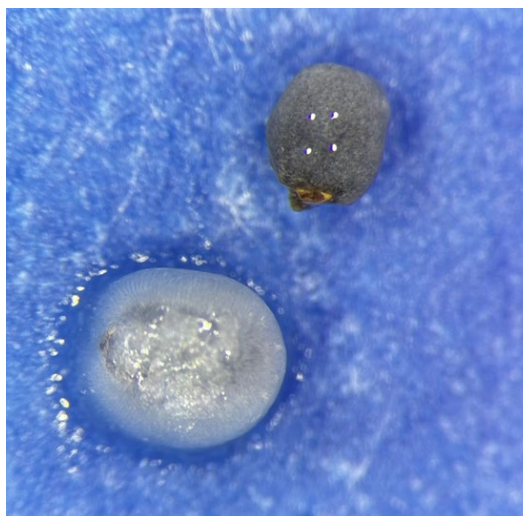
During seedling evaluations, basil seed mucilage can look like a decayed seed, but the mucilage should not be considered when determining if the seedling is normal or abnormal.



Dry basil seeds. (Elizabeth Stewart AMS SRTD 2023)



Basil seeds two minutes after watering. (Elizabeth Stewart AMS SRTD 2023)



Basil seeds four minutes after watering. (Elizabeth Stewart AMS SRTD 2023)

Reference:

Zhou, D (2012) *Seed Germination Performance and Mucilage Production of Sweet Basil*. Master of Science in Horticulture, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

For more information regarding this article, contact Botanist Elizabeth Stewart (704) 810-8873; elizabeth.stewart1@usda.gov.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- American Seed Trade Association, Seed Expo
Orlando FL; December 4 - 7, 2023
- Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies
Destin Florida; June 14-19, 2024
- The Association of American Seed Control Official Annual Meeting
Utah; July 14-20
- Association of Official Seed Analysts/ Society of Commercial Seed Technologist Annual Meeting
Rapid City SD; June 1-6

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) identity (including gender expression civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender), sexual orientation, disability,

age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.