



NEBRASKA SEED FOCUS

*A Publication of the Nebraska Crop Improvement Association
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**2027 Nebraska Seed
Improvement Conference
January 11-12, 2027
Holiday Inn
Kearney, NE**

2027 Seed Improvement Conference Launches a Historic Anniversary Year

The Nebraska Crop Improvement Association is pleased to announce the 2027 Seed Improvement Conference, scheduled for January 11-12, 2027, at the Holiday Inn in Kearney, Nebraska.

This year's conference promises to be especially significant as we celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Nebraska Crop Improvement Association (NCIA). Since its founding in 1902, NCIA has played a vital role in supporting Nebraska agriculture through seed certification, genetic purity standards, and partnerships that promote the production and distribution of high-quality seed.

The Seed Improvement Conference has long served as an important educational and networking event for seed industry professionals, growers, researchers, students, and agricultural partners from across the region. Attendees can expect timely updates on seed certification, crop improvement programs, research developments, industry trends, and regulatory issues impacting the seed sector.

As we begin celebrating 125 years of service to Nebraska agriculture, the 2027 conference will also provide an opportunity to reflect on the organization's rich history and recognize the individuals, companies, and institutions that have contributed to its success.

Whether you are a long-time participant or attending for the first time, we invite you to join us in Kearney as we honor our past, celebrate our present accomplishments, and look toward the future of seed improvement in Nebraska.

Additional conference details, registration information, and anniversary celebration plans will be announced in the coming months.

Mark your calendars today: January 11-12, 2027, at the Holiday Inn in Kearney, Nebraska. We look forward to celebrating 125 years of excellence with you!

DATES and EVENTS

July 1

Field Applications - Millet, Soybeans, Chickpeas

July 3

Office and UNL Closed

August 1

Sales Reports - Spring Grains, Millet, Peas, Soybeans, Chickpeas

August 21

NCIA Board Meeting

September 7

Office and UNL Closed

November 26-27

Office and UNL Closed

December 1

Sales Reports - Winter Small Grains, Grasses

December 11

NCIA Board Meeting

December 24-January 1

Office and UNL Closed

The Changing Role of Seed Certification

In the beginning, seed certification of many crops including wheat, corn, and soybeans was built around public plant breeding systems, where certification provided the identity, purity, and market trust needed to move new varieties into commerce.

That structure began to change with the Plant Variety Protection Act (PVPA) of 1970. PVPA created a formal intellectual property system for privately and publicly developed seed-propagated varieties, enabling private breeders to enter the same production and distribution channels that had been largely built around public varieties.

Private varieties initially moved through certification because the system already provided identity, traceability, and access to growers, dealers, and customers. Certification functioned as a gateway for proprietary genetics into established market channels.

Over time, as companies built branded seed systems and direct grower-dealer relationships, they gradually internalized the functions certification once provided. Quality assurance and identity verification shifted toward proprietary quality systems and internal standards. This transition is clearly evident in Nebraska's two largest crops—corn and soybeans—where certification has largely been replaced by private systems.

Wheat has followed a different path due to its stronger reliance on public breeding and regional adaptation, keeping certification more structurally embedded in its seed supply chain. Corn certification still plays a meaningful role in export-oriented seed movement where third-party certification is required or preferred in international trade, while certification of corn destined for domestic use is very limited.

The model of gradual withdrawal from certification is already established in Nebraska's top two crops. The open question is whether wheat will remain connected to certification—or follow the same path of decoupling as corn and soybeans as private companies continue to expand.

Importantly, this shift does not reflect a loss of need for identity verification, but rather a redistribution of how that function is delivered. Hybrid systems, proprietary branding, patents, and internal quality controls have not eliminated the role certification once played—they have replaced it with competing systems of trust that operate outside of certification, particularly in corn and soybeans, while wheat remains partially anchored to the public certification framework.

Looking forward, the question is not whether certification remains relevant, but whether wheat represents the next stage of a well-established shift in how identity and trust are delivered in the seed industry—or whether it will remain the exception that preserves that connection.



Wheat Seminar Cancelled

The Nebraska Crop Improvement Association has cancelled the Phil Needham Wheat Management Seminar that had been scheduled for August 21 in North Platte.

The decision was made in light of the challenging growing season and poor growing conditions experienced across much of Nebraska's wheat-producing region. Given the reduced crop potential in many areas, it was determined that postponing the event was the most appropriate course of action.

NCIA appreciates the interest shown by producers and industry partners and thanks Phil Needham for his willingness to share his expertise. We look forward to future opportunities to bring wheat growers together for educational programs as conditions improve.

Cody Harris Earns Registered Seed Technologist (RST) Certification

Cody Harris has earned the Registered Seed Technologist (RST) designation through AOSA/SCST after successfully completing both components of the examination.

Cody previously earned the Certified Viability Technologist (CVT) designation by passing the germination component of the exam last August. He most recently completed the purity component this May, fulfilling the requirements for full RST certification. The RST designation recognizes advanced competency in seed purity and germination analysis and reflects his years of laboratory experience and professional development.

With this achievement, NCIA Laboratory Services is again staffed with a Registered Seed Technologist, strengthening the seed testing services available to Nebraska seed producers.

Carryover and New Crop Seed Testing

Now is the perfect time to test your carryover seed! Remember, all carryover seed must be retested before any sales this fall. Some growers overlook this step and end up with seed that's ineligible for sale during the short certification season. To avoid delays, be sure to send in a sample of any carryover seed to update its germination status.

When submitting samples, please include the fieldname and lot number—this helps us process your tests as quickly as possible. For newly harvested small grains, keep in mind that dormancy requires an extra 5 days before testing can begin, so new crop samples typically take about 14 days to complete.

Make sure to clearly label your samples with the NCIA field name and the tests needed. Missing information can cause delays in processing. If you need seed sample bags, just call the NCIA office – we'll be happy to send them out to you free of charge.

When sending seed samples via postal service, please note that NCIA only receives mail through UNL on odd-numbered days of the week. However, UPS and FedEx deliver to NCIA every day.