



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Grain Inspection,  
Packers and Stockyards  
Administration

Stop 3630  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
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August 25, 2012

Reference # 250

**TO:** FGIS POLICY BULLETIN BOARD

**FROM:** Robert Lijewski, Director /s/ *Robert Lijewski*  
Field Management Division

**SUBJECT:** Hops Inspection

**ORIGINATING OFFICE:** Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch

### 1. PURPOSE

This memorandum clarifies the policy on seed identification in Hops.

### 2. BACKGROUND

The Hops Inspection Handbook, Chapter 1 defines seed as Hops seed, regardless of maturity. Hops varieties grown today include those which produce a seed that cannot germinate and are of higher commercial value to brewers than Hops from varieties with the capability of germinating. Seeds which are capable of germinating contain oils which are detrimental to brewing. The Hops industry refers to seeds which can germinate as “viable” seeds, and seeds which cannot germinate are known as “sterile” seeds. GIPSA does not determine seed viability so does not use the word “viable” in the Handbook. Germination-capable seeds are readily discernible from non-germinating seeds during the course of inspection. Seed Analysis is provided in Chapter 3, section 3.7 of the Hops Inspection Handbook.

The Hops Commissions in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) States have indicated to GIPSA that Hops seed identification may not be conducted uniformly in the three PNW States. Therefore, they have asked GIPSA to further define Hops seeds in the official instructions whereby the seeds which are not capable of germinating would not be counted as seeds because of the sterility issue, reasoning that a seed is only a seed if it can germinate. Additionally, the Hops Commissions asked for clarification on whether the husks and hulls should be counted as seed.

### 3. INSPECTION PROCEDURES

The following definition applies to all Hops inspections. Hops seed is defined as a whole germination-capable seed regardless of maturity, excluding broken hulls, husks, or pieces of seed. Seeds of the type which are determined incapable of germinating are not counted as Hops seed.

To aid in seed identification, inspection personnel are permitted to take any dried Hops material remaining on top of the 4 x 20 wire mesh sieve after separation, and re-crush that material in the coarse, mesh, cotton cloth or with tweezers, whereby the sterile seed and the other non-seed material is readily identifiable.

There is no change to the computation of seed weight or certifying of results.

#### **4. FILING INSTRUCTIONS**

Retain a copy of the memorandum with Hops Inspection Handbook until the handbook is revised to include new guidelines for identifying Hops seeds. Field office managers please provide a copy of this memorandum to the official agencies within your circuit that are responsible for the inspection of Hops.

#### **5. QUESTIONS**

Direct questions regarding this policy to Patrick McCluskey, Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch, at (816) 659-8403 or email at [Patrick.J.McCluskey@usda.gov](mailto:Patrick.J.McCluskey@usda.gov), or Beverly Whalen, Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch, at (816) 659-8410 or email at [Beverly.A.Whalen@usda.gov](mailto:Beverly.A.Whalen@usda.gov) .