

# Field Inspector Guidelines

As a field inspector, you have the duty to file a complete, concise, and accurate field report that will enable KCIA office personnel to confirm or deny a field's approval for certification.

The guidelines will aid decision-making and will help maintain uniformity of service to our applicants and ultimately the consumer of certified seed. Information helpful to the inspector in meeting the expectations of KCIA Field Services is also included.

## Prerequisites

**Annual Employment Agreement: All inspectors must have a signed Annual Employment Agreement on record at KCIA prior to inspecting.**

**Confidentiality:** All information provided by KCIA and all information compiled by the inspector pertaining to an applicant or to office activity is considered confidential and is not to be forwarded. Confidentiality is addressed in the Annual Employee Agreement.

**Conflict of Interest:** Personal and/or business relationships which could impede an inspector's ability to fairly and accurately inspect a field, or give the appearance of potential favoritism, or vendetta, constitute conflicts of interest. Notify KCIA if a potential conflict of interest exists or may exist. The KCIA will make a determination whether to assign a different inspector. Conflict of Interest is addressed in the Annual Employee Agreement.

**Professionalism:** Inspectors are to conduct themselves professionally. Applicants and growers are to be treated with courtesy. Likewise, inspectors should expect similar courtesy. In the unlikely event of confrontation on the part of the applicant or grower toward the inspector, the inspector is to immediately leave the premises and notify the Director or the Executive Director.

Dress should be appropriate to the weather conditions and chosen so as not to offend our client. Clothing should provide protection and adequate coverage and ventilation.

Make every effort to arrive on time. If delay is imminent contact the grower advising of the delay. Plan your schedule to allow for predictable delays.

Use care in what is said to the applicant, do not give advice or voice opinions. Direct any questions not pertaining to the immediate inspection to the KCIA office.

## Pre-Inspection

**Annual Training Meeting:** The Director will be responsible for deciding if experienced inspectors are required to attend a scheduled training session. Training is required for new hires. Notification will be by e-mail, post, or phone.

**Applicant contact\*:** As soon as possible after receiving field allocations, contact all applicants in your field file to notify them that you are their assigned inspector. Leave your name and a contact number. Ask them to contact you **7 to 10 days before**

harvest to schedule inspection. Inform the applicants that timely notification will help avoid harvest delays and allow them to correct problems and request a re-inspection if necessary. Ask if they intend to accompany you through the field. If they intend to accompany you to the field they must make a reasonable effort to accommodate your schedule or postpone their inspection until your schedule can accommodate them.

Applicants tend to not call until the field is ready to harvest. This is too late to cover all the acres allocated and will result in delayed harvest and complaints. If after making initial contact with the applicant, you fail to hear from them, yet you see that the wheat fields around you are ripening, recall the applicants and begin the inspections.

Ask the applicant to confirm that the field has not been sprayed or fumigated with chemicals requiring an REI (restricted entry interval) and that there will be no spraying or fumigating conducted in the field or adjacent fields at the time of inspection. Delay inspection of fields that have been sprayed or fumigated until it is safe to enter.

**You are not authorized by KCIA to enter any field or structure where a pesticide is being applied or for which an REI is in effect.**

\* NOTE: Throughout the guidelines, "applicant" implies the person responsible for certification of a field. In many if not most instances, the applicant and the grower is the same person. In other instances the applicant has contracted with a grower to produce seed and therefore the applicant is responsible for meeting certification requirements and is the one we are doing business with. The initial contact and dealings are to be conducted through the applicant whether or not that person is the one growing the crop. During the initial contact the inspector must ask the applicant (if different from the grower) who is responsible for contacting the inspector when the field is ready for inspection, and then contact the contract grower, if instructed by the applicant to do so.

**Applicant attendance:** The applicant may accompany the inspector. In some instances taking the applicant may expedite the inspection. The inspector may accommodate the grower as long as it does not slow inspection progress or cause distraction. The inspector directs the field inspection. The applicant must not be allowed to inhibit the inspector's progress through the field. The applicant must not try to influence the inspector's decisions. If this occurs, the Director shall be notified, who will then contact the applicant.

If the applicant and the grower are not one and the same, yet the grower wants to accompany the inspector through the field without the permission of the applicant, the grower is NOT privy to information on the Inspection Form which is solely the property of KCIA and the applicant.

DO NOT allow an applicant to accompany you to another applicant's field.

**Planning travel route:** Plan travel to minimize mileage and travel time. Map the most direct route to and between fields. Avoid traveling back and forth across the county to inspect fields. Sometimes this may be necessary, but often, excessive travel is avoided by planning and remaining in contact with your allocated applicants.

## Conducting the Field Inspection

Always remember: Field inspection protects the person who buys and uses certified seed. **You are not conducting the field inspection to help the applicant get his/her field accepted, you are determining if the applicant has met their responsibility for meeting field standards adopted by the KCIA and agreed to by the applicant.** It is failure on the part of the applicant and not of the inspector if a field does not meet requirements. You as an inspector for KCIA have an obligation to conduct the field inspection in a conscientious and thorough manner, accurately report on the inspection form what you see in the field, and justly recommend acceptance or rejection of the field.

**Field Standards:** Inspectors will adhere to the KCIA crop standards as cited in the Kansas Standards for Seed Certification and Seed Handling Facilities or presented in other forms. Any interpretation of the standards beyond these guidelines must be authorized by the Director, Certification Services.

The inspector will fully understand field standards for each crop inspected and be capable of properly applying those standards in the field. The inspector will contact the Director if unsure about a particular situation found while conducting a field inspection.

The inspector should carry flagging tape to mark problem areas such as uncontrolled areas of field bindweed as an aid to the applicant. Under no circumstances, however, is flagging by an inspector to be considered adequate control for passing a field. Due to the randomness of the field inspection, it is not sufficient for an applicant to follow an inspector through the field correcting any problems found. The applicant must re-walk the field and request a re-inspection if desired.

**Completeness of Field Inspection:** Traverse a field in a pattern that insures reasonable and accurate assessment of that field's compliance with field standards. Once inspection is initiated, the whole field will be inspected even though it may be obvious early in the inspection that the field will not pass. Failure to inspect the whole field before rejecting it will not allow accurate description of the extent of the problem or may miss other problems.

*The inspection report will be complete and concise in a manner that allows a third party (KCIA staff) assessment of field compliance.*

**Cancellation of a field:** An applicant may cancel a field at any time up to entry into the field by the inspector. Write "cancelled by applicant" in the comments section on Inspection Form, give the applicant the yellow copy and return the white copy to KCIA. If on arrival at a field it is obvious that the field will be rejected (i.e. the inspector can see rye in the field prior to inspection) encourage the applicant to cancel the field. In this case, if the applicant instead decides to rogue the field and have it inspected, inspection priority will be given to fields already scheduled and the offending field will be inspected as scheduling allows. Inspectors will not postpone inspection of other fields to accommodate applicants/growers who did not properly prepare their fields.

**Re-inspection of rejected fields:** If a field is rejected, but the applicant wants to correct the problem and have the field re-inspected, clearly note on the Inspection Form that the applicant requests a second inspection. The re-inspection may or not be

assigned to another inspector. The inspector conducting the re-inspection will utilize the Field Re-Inspection Form and keep conscientious record of mileage and hours spent doing the re-inspection on the Field Re-Inspection Form. The inspection will proceed as if it is a new inspection although particular attention will be paid to the initial problem that caused the field to be rejected. If the original problem has been corrected but the re-inspection finds a different reason, missed in the first inspection, to reject the field, Field Services will provide a third inspection, no charge, at the applicant's request. **If a form other than the Re-Inspection Form is used, write "re-inspection" clearly on the field report and also include the mileage and hours.**

### Applicant Notification of Inspection Results:

**Inform the APPLICANT (who may or may not be the grower) of the inspection results as soon as possible after the field inspection is complete, especially if a field is rejected. Leave the yellow copy with the APPLICANT and not with the grower if they are not the same person, unless prior instructions from the applicant direct you to do so. The applicant is the person who requested and paid for the inspection and is technically the only one privy to the inspection results.**

**Form Submission:** As soon as possible, send the original copy of the field report to KCIA. **Do not hold reports until the end of the season.** Submit rejected fields immediately. If an applicant requests a re-inspection of a rejected field, make sure to note the request on the KCIA copy and submit that form to KCIA immediately.

**Field Isolation:** The KCIA crop standards generally state that a field for certification must be clearly defined with distinct lines of demarcation. This is necessary to allow the inspector to determine areas to be removed for isolation. This demarcation may be achieved by a fence, road, ditch, mowed strip, stakes, an unplanted strip, or other method that allows the inspector to clearly recognize the field boundaries.

Inspectors should observe whether the field meets the crop-specific isolation requirements. Where it is felt necessary, a cautionary note may be made in the comment area as a reminder to observe isolation requirements for the class of seed being produced.

If the applicant indicates intended isolations on the Inspection Form but did not mark them in the field, it is sufficient to note in the comments section of Inspection Form that isolation areas have been identified by the applicant, PROVIDED the field boundaries are otherwise clearly defined. If there are prohibited weeds in the proposed isolation area they must be controlled or the isolation strip clearly staked. This is because uncontrolled prohibited weeds cannot be in the field and the isolation is part of the field.

**Varietal Purity: A field that fails to meet varietal purity requirements using sequential plant counts will be rejected.** If the contamination is due to planter contamination and is confined to an area of the field, the applicant may stake the offending area and request a re-inspection on the remainder of the field, or may rogue the field and request a Re-inspection if feasible. A re-inspection form or a field application form clearly marked "re-inspection" and with field number, field information, mileage traveled and hours used for the re-inspection correctly entered will be used.

**Prohibited Weeds:** If living and viable prohibited weeds are present in a field and suitable control measures have not been taken to prevent their being harvested with the crop, that field is to be rejected. It will be contingent upon the inspector to use his/her best judgment when reporting on the adequacy of control measures taken by the applicant when prohibited weeds, as listed in the specific crop standards, are present.

The following may be used as guidance:

Suitable control measures.

1. Staking – Stakes must be visible above the canopy. There is no minimum interval between stakes, but stakes should clearly define the infested area. The inspector will walk the perimeter of the staked area in a straight line from stake to stake to verify that no prohibited weeds are outside the controlled area. If prohibited weeds are present along an edge of the field and the applicant decides to forego harvest of that edge for seed he/she must indicate this intention by notifying the inspector prior to inspection, or by placing at least one stake at each end of the field so that verification by the inspector of this intention is possible. Any area of infestation not staked or otherwise controlled is grounds for rejection.
2. Mowing – areas of prohibited weeds may be mowed before inspection but not so long prior that prohibited weeds are able to grow into unmown crop or grow to a height where harvesting is possible. Any area of infestation not mowed or otherwise controlled is grounds for rejection.
3. Chemical Spray – fields broadcast or spot-sprayed with herbicide to control prohibited must be treated in a manner that kills all prohibited plants in the field. Less than 100% control will be grounds for rejection. Chemical must have been applied enough in advance of field inspection to allow the inspector the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the control. Fields awaiting chemical application at the time of inspection will be placed at the bottom of the inspector's list so as not to delay inspection of other fields. Any area of infestation not chemically or otherwise controlled is grounds for rejection.

A plant may be considered chemically controlled if, due to chemical application, the plant is weak, spindly, and likely will not set seed due to poor vigor.

4. Isolation – any uncontrolled prohibited weeds present in an area to be removed to meet genetic isolation requirements (isolation strip) will be grounds for rejection unless that isolation has been properly staked and recognizable by the inspector.

**Note: Variance to Prohibited Weeds for Wheat:** By board of Director action, for the biennial weed musk thistle, the first year rosette stage only, which will not produce a seed stalk, will not be cause for rejection. Second-year musk thistle will still be cause for rejection. If you are in a field and only find first-year

rosette (unlikely that there will be no second-year) mark it on the report and list control as “first-year biennial”.

**Karnal Bunt:** Karnal bunt has not been identified in Kansas. It is not easily identified in the field. If however, an inspector suspects that Karnal bunt may be present in a field, that inspector will notify the KCIA directly and as soon as possible. **This is sufficiently important to displace all other inspections and duties of an inspector and shall be given the utmost priority by the inspector.**

**Discretion is required:** The economic implications of Karnal bunt for wheat production in Kansas are too great to let unsubstantiated rumors of its presence spread should the field prove to not actually have Karnal bunt. **First notify KCIA**, then the applicant, and no one else. KCIA will notify the appropriate authorities to have the field tested. The inspector will collect several heads expressing suspected symptoms, place them in a sealed plastic bag and deliver them to KCIA immediately. As a precaution the inspector is NOT to inspect other fields without changing clothes and disinfecting shoes and/or boots in a 1.5% (2 ounces Clorox per 1 gallon of water) solution of Clorox.

**Loose Smut and Common bunt:** If common bunt is found in a field during inspection, but is below the rejectable level based on sequential plant counts, note in the comments of Inspection Form that a seed treatment **MUST** be used before the seed is distributed. If loose smut is present at below rejection levels note in the comments section that a systemic seed treatment is recommended.

**Plant Counts:** Plant counts for genetic purity will be conducted on every field and noted on the inspection report. A field can be passed on the basis of a minimum plant count (i.e. 1 off-type per 5000 for the Certified class) **but cannot be rejected unless the sequential sampling chart indicates that it should be.** The sequential sampling chart provided to inspectors will be adhered to when making decisions regarding rejection of a field for genetic impurity or other factors requiring plant counts (such as common bunt). Plants counts will be made at random areas of a field and in a manner that accurately represents the field.

**Rye or Triticale in wheat:** If rye or triticale is found in a field of wheat, the field is rejected. If the applicant requests a reinspection the procedure described above for reinspection will be adhered to. The inspector may remove from the field only one rye or triticale plant and if that is the only plant seen, pass the field. **Carry the plant from the field.** The presence of any more plants is automatic rejection. However, the whole field will be inspected even if rye can be seen from the road unless the applicant decides to cancel the field before inspection begins. The inspector is not to rogue rye or triticale while conducting the inspection. It distracts the inspector and it is not a proper roguing technique and it places undue liability on the inspector for missed plants. Also, KCIA does not pay inspectors to rogue fields.

**Objectionable and Common weeds:** Objectionable and common weeds (common weeds are all weeds not listed as either Prohibited or Objectionable) are generally not grounds for field rejection. However, if weeds are so heavy as to impede inspection, whether by impeding movement through the field or by restricting the viewing of the crop the field may be rejected. If the severe weed problem is restricted to an easily identifiable part of the field, a

comment should be made in the comment area of the inspection report to avoid that area at harvest. Note the special consideration for the presence of Jointed Goatgrass in wheat fields.

**Jointed Goatgrass:** Jointed Goatgrass is listed as an objectionable weed in wheat. Its mere presence is not, therefore, grounds for rejection of a field in the same manner as for field bindweed. However, KCIA crop standards for wheat require that seed harvested from a field with jointed Goatgrass must be cleaned over a length grader or gravity table in addition to the usual cleaning over an air/screen cleaner. Write this requirement in the comments when jointed Goatgrass is found.

### General Administrative

**Wages:** Hourly rates are paid for time spent traveling and for conducting inspections. Time off for meals is not paid.

**Overtime:** KCIA considers the work week to consist of 40 hours Sunday to Monday. Overtime (over 40 hours in a week) must be authorized by the Director prior to performance of work. Overtime will be permitted only if it can be shown as an economical alternative by offsetting greater expense, or if urgency requires that a field inspection cannot be delayed.

**Inspector Performance Evaluation:** An inspector's performance evaluation may be based on such things as availability during the season, cost per acre inspected, completeness of inspection reports, timeliness of inspection report submittal, applicant satisfaction, and incidence of failure of seed from inspected fields to pass laboratory weed examination for weeds not listed in inspection. An Inspector Performance Survey will be periodically mailed to certification applicants asking for comments on their inspector's performance.

**Phone:** Phone use should be kept to a minimum. Initial calls to applicants are necessary to schedule inspections but should not be allowed to become extended conversations. However, do not hesitate to use the phone if needed to avoid a delay in the field. Proper pre-planning will reduce the necessity for phone calls.

Phone calls for which reimbursement is requested must be accompanied by a billing statement. KCIA will reimburse inspectors for incoming calls from KCIA staff with an itemized statement.

Total cost of calls to any one applicant should seldom exceed a total of 1 to 2 dollars for the season. Cell phone users should check with their service providers for a temporary increase in program minutes to avoid excessive per minute charges.

**Meals:** KCIA does not reimburse for meals unless lodging is required.

**Mileage:** Mileage is paid at the IRS designated rate.

**Lodging:** If an inspector is requested to work outside of his/her home area and overnight lodging is required for efficient task performance, that inspector will be reimbursed for all reasonable lodging costs. The inspector should seek motels in the mid-price range or lower.

**Expense Reimbursement:** KCIA issues paychecks bi-monthly. Expenses must be submitted at least 5 days prior to receive payment at the next issuance.

**Safety:** Inspectors are required to read safety information and to attend safety training provided by KCIA. It is important for an inspector to know his/her physical limitations. It is also important that the inspector be aware of the warning signs of impending medical problems such as heat stroke or heart attack when in the field. Just as important is constant awareness of the physical environment around you such as heat, lightning, tornado, venomous snakes, bulls, dogs, holes, ditches, etc. Leave the field immediately if illness or impending danger nears. Avoid approaching areas where suspicious activity is occurring. **Do not risk health or well being in order to complete an inspection.** Postpone the inspection until it can be conducted safely, or in the case of medical illness, request that another inspector be sent. If the applicant accompanies the inspector to the field, stay aware of his/her well-being also.

**Cooperation:** KCIA inspectors are a team of professionals and as such are expected to cooperate and aid each other. Inspectors should be willing to help a neighboring inspector with field inspections should their own schedule allow.

**Availability:** Inspectors are expected to make every reasonable effort to be available during critical times of high field inspection activity.

**Inspector Errors:** Honest mistakes or misunderstandings on the part of the inspector are seen more as opportunities to learn rather than reasons for reprimand, provided that the mistakes are dealt with quickly, openly and honestly. It's better to be prepared but if you make a mistake correct it as soon as possible and note that it has been corrected.

**Grievances:** Inspectors with grievances with the Inspections Manager may contact the Executive Director of the KCIA if they feel that is the appropriate action. See grievance policy in handbook.