

Read those seed labels

FORT COLLINS, Colo. — Seed labels can be a big dollar saver for winter wheat growers, says a Colorado State University extension agronomist.

Extension specialist Mark Brick pointed out that reading labels at the time of seed purchase is the only way to be certain of seeds' varietal purity, quality and freedom from noxious weed seeds and seed-transmitted insects and diseases.

Under state law all seed must be labeled for germination and

purity. Seed labels carry an analysis of germination, purity, inert matter, weed seed content, percent of other crop seed and date of test.

Brick pointed out that winter wheat growers should know the meaning of and look for these terms:

Pure seed: The percentage by weight of crop seed compared to other inert matter. The best quality seed will be nearly 100 percent pure. To meet certified seed standards for small grains,

seed must be more than 98 percent pure.

Other crop seed: The percentage of any other crop seed in the test sample.

Inert matter: The percentage by weight of sand, sticks, broken seed parts and other foreign material in the seed. This percentage will be small in high-quality seed. The higher the percentage of inert material, the higher the cost of remaining pure, live seed.

Weed seed content: The percentage by weight of weed seed.

State seed regulations do not allow for any prohibited noxious weed seed content. Any restricted noxious weed seed content must be listed on the label.

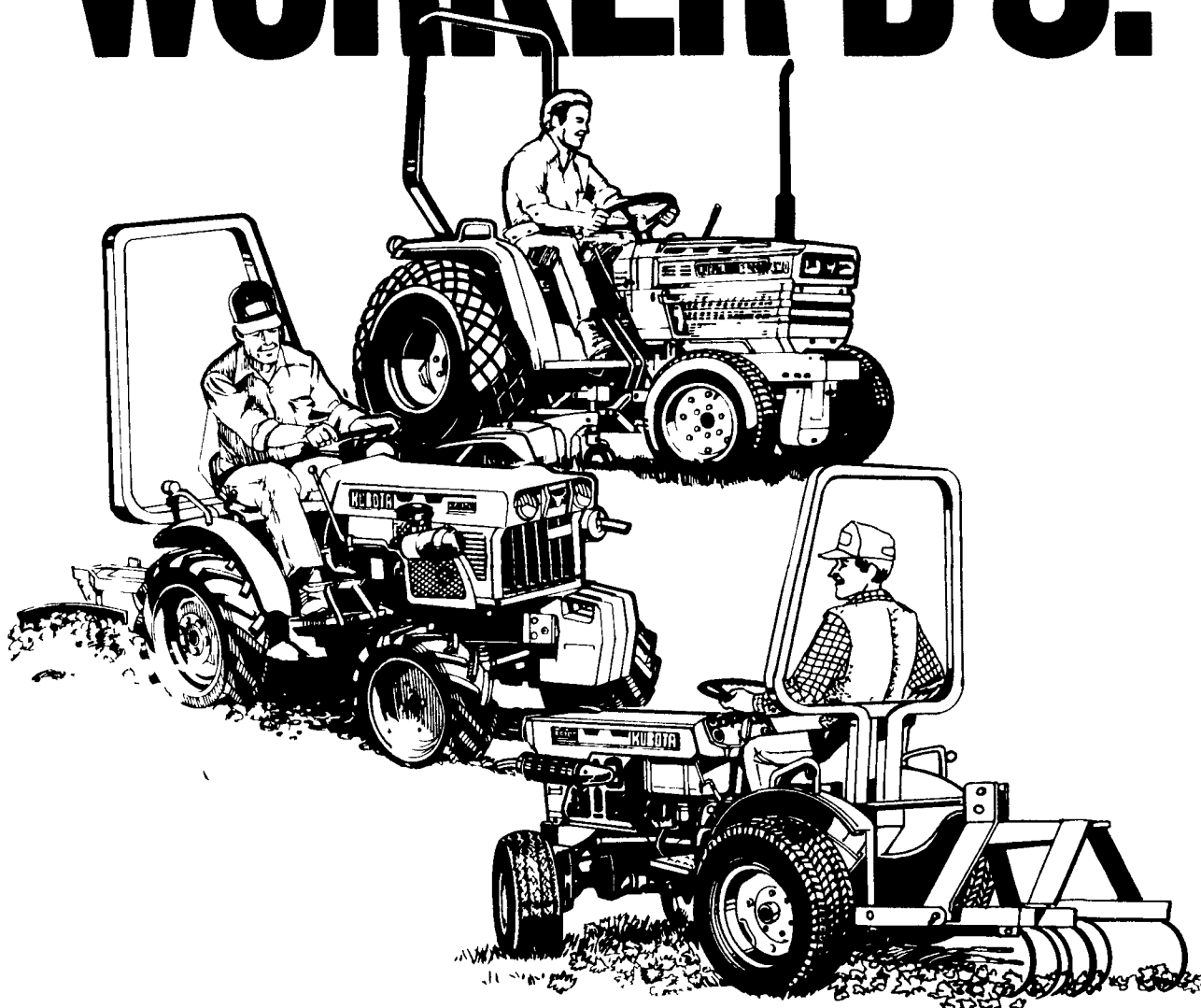
Germination: The percentage of pure seed that will germinate under standardized laboratory conditions. Low-germination seed may be less vigorous.

Date of test: The date denotes when the germination test was made. This date should be within

the previous 12 months of the date of sale to ensure that the quality of seed, especially carry-over seed, will not vary from the information printed on the tag.

Brick also warned seed buyers to watch out for shriveled wheat seed. Shriveled and light test-weight seed can reduce yields by five to 10 bushels per acre. Because of poor soil moisture in some areas, shriveled wheat is plentiful this year.

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