

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
SPECIFICATIONS FOR STANDARD AND NON-STANDARD SEED
ITEMS – RD-4 list**

PROCEDURES AND RATIONAL

August 2004

Justification:

To provide an unbiased and scientific basis for selection of seed used by Virginia Department of Transportation [VDOT] on roadside projects.

To test new cultivars under Virginia roadside conditions.

Methods:

To best simulate roadside conditions and practices used by VDOT:

- **Sites chosen throughout the Commonwealth** in different climatic regions
 - o tests performed in Virginia, not in other regions of the country
- **Seeded at highway rates**, not lawn or athletic field rates
- **Site preparation same as VDOT specifications**,
- **Fertilizer is applied only at time of seeding**,
- **Mowed 2-4 times per year**,
- **Mowed at roadside height**,
- **Weed control is used only if the test is in danger of being lost**
- **Non-irrigated sites**
- **Uses a replicated and randomized design**
 - o To allow statistical analysis of the data

Evaluation:

The percent of live ground cover using visual and scientific methods is the primary factor in determining if the cultivar is suited for use on Virginia roadsides. The cultivars that are recommended for inclusion in Form RD-4 will have achieved and maintained 70% or greater ground coverage three or more years after being sown. The standard test is for three years but may be extended if the test areas have not been subjected to several stress periods. This determination will be based on weather data collected at the sites and on the overall condition of the test plots

This process ensures that new cultivars introduced into the market are evaluated in Virginia environments and the ones selected are best suited to roadside conditions and maintenance protocols. There is no testing fee to the companies supplying seed, which insures that is no bias or obligation to the seed suppliers. This testing procedure is designed so that the cultivars on the VDOT Seed Specifications for Grasses and Legumes (Form RD-4) document may be periodically updated.

Notification of new cultivar test:

A letter and / or e-mail notification is sent to all national seed producers known to the Virginia Tech researchers at the time of the test. [Attachment #1] A letter and / or email is sent to all companies listed by the Virginia Crop Improvement, Inc [VCIA] as VDOT green tag customers.

There are a limited number of entries per supplier and only named cultivars [or scheduled to be named] will be accepted in the test. This keeps the size of the replicated trial to a manageable size and helps to make sure only cultivars that are in production or scheduled to go into production are tested.

Planting and evaluation:

Shall best simulate current VDOT methods. See methods and evaluation sections above.

Length of time on list:

Successful cultivars shall be listed on the RD-4 list for at least three years. If a cultivar has not been used on a VDOT project in the three years, it will be scheduled to be removed from the RD-4 list after one more additional year. A mark will be placed next to the cultivar name in the RD-4 list to signify that it will be removed if not used on a VDOT project in the fourth year. The three year period shall start on the year following the seeds last use on a VDOT project.

Note; that “Used on a VDOT project” is defined as the seed being processed through the VCIA green tag procedure.

Cultivars may also be removed if there is no more production and no supply of the seed at distributors.