

Directive

FGIS 9180.16

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INSPECTION FOR RAGWEED (AMBROSIA) SEED

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1. PURPOSE

This directive establishes procedures for examining lots of grain for common (a.k.a. annual) ragweed seed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* L.) and giant (a.k.a. great) ragweed seed (*Ambrosia trifida* L.). The analysis of this inspection factor is provided under the authority of the [United States Grain Standards Act](#), as amended.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive replaces Directive 9180.16 – Inspection of Export Lots of Soybeans for Ragweed Seeds and Directive 9180.83 – Inspection for Ragweed Seeds in Lots of Wheat. This directive consolidates previous guidance to eliminate redundancy, ensures uniformity across grains, and provides flexibility for applicant-specific inspection requests. Additionally, it expands the scope of those directives to provide for analysis of ragweed seed in all grains upon request.

3. BACKGROUND

Previous FGIS directives were limited to import restrictions on ragweed for wheat shipments to Egypt and soybean shipments to Russia. Ragweed inspections remain essential to meet contractual obligations and honor certain applicant requests. FGIS is expanding the program to allow official personnel to provide inspection for ragweed seed upon applicant request.

4. REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

Analysis for ragweed seed is available for all grains inspected under the U.S. Grain Standards Act. Interested parties electing to receive ragweed seed determinations can contact their local field office or designated official agency and request ragweed seed be added as a factor to an inspection for grade or provided as a factor-only inspection.

The default inspection method is to provide a count of ragweed seeds. However, applicants may request inspection on a percentage basis instead of a count. For export sublots inspected under the CuSum loading plan, the applicant must specify inspection on a maximum or an average basis. Please ensure these items are clearly identified in the load order or service request.

Please note that this determination is not required for most shipments. FGIS and official agencies will only perform ragweed inspections upon applicant request.

5. PROCEDURE

Basis of Determination.

Ragweed seed may be determined on a count or percentage basis at the request of the applicant for service.

Basis of Determination (Count). Determine the total number of ragweed seeds on a representative portion of 1000 – 1050 grams before the removal of dockage and/or foreign material.

Basis of Determination (Percentage). Determine the percentage of ragweed seed on a representative portion of 1000 – 1050 grams before the removal of dockage and/or foreign material.

Note: For grains with standard working portion sizes less than 1000 – 1050 grams, use the established working portion size for determining U.S. Sample Grade criteria for that specific grain as identified in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 – WORK PORTION SIZE FOR DETERMINING RAGWEED SEED BY USGSA GRAIN

USGSA Grain	Work Portion Size (before the removal of dockage and/or foreign material)
Barley	850 – 950 grams
Canola	500 grams
Corn	1000 – 1050 grams
Flaxseed	1000 – 1050 grams
Mixed Grain	1000 – 1050 grams
Oats	700 – 800 grams
Rye	1000 – 1050 grams
Sorghum	1000 – 1050 grams
Soybeans	1000 – 1050 grams
Sunflower Seed	600 grams
Triticale	1000 – 1050 grams
Wheat	1000 – 1050 grams

Physical Characteristics.

Generally, ragweed seeds have distinctive features that make them identifiable, especially the Common and Giant Ragweed species. **Refer to the Visual Reference Image (VRI) "[Ragweed Seed](#)" for accurate identification.**

a. Common ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*) seed.

- (1) *Shape and Size:* Small, top-shaped, or bur-like, measuring approximately 0.14 inches (3.5mm) long and 0.1 inches (2.5mm) wide.
- (2) *Color and Texture:* Seeds can be gray, tan, brown, or nearly black, and are ridged.
- (3) *Ridges and Spines:* Seeds have several smaller longitudinal ridges that terminate in 5 to 8 short, blunt, spine-like projections forming a crown around a central beak. Seeds also may appear rough or shriveled.



FIGURE 1 – COMMON RAGWEED SEED - FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. REFER TO THE VISUAL REFERENCE IMAGE (VRI) “[RAGWEED SEED](#)” FOR ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION.

b. Giant ragweed (*Ambrosia trifida* L.) seed.

- (1) *Shape and Size:* Larger than Common ragweed, top-shaped, or bur-like, ranging from 0.2 inches (5.1 mm) to 0.6 (15.2 mm) inches in length.
- (2) *Color and Texture:* Seeds can be gray, tan, brown, or nearly black, and are ridged.
- (3) *Ridges and Spines:* Seeds have several longitudinal ridges that terminate in 5 to 8 short, blunt, spine-like projections forming a crown around a central beak.



FIGURE 2 – GIANT RAGWEED SEED - FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. REFER TO THE VISUAL REFERENCE IMAGE (VRI) “[RAGWEED SEED](#)” FOR ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION.

Export Sublot Inspection.

For export sublots inspected using the CuSum loading program, record the count or percentage on the inspection log (factor name in APS is “Ragweed (Ambrosia) Seeds”; abbreviation AMBS). There are no established breakpoints for this factor, so any sublot above a maximum specified count or percentage will be designated as a material portion and be eligible for review inspections according to [Grain Inspection Handbook III - Inspection Procedures](#). Following CuSum procedures, average the results of any review inspections with the original inspection result.

6. CERTIFICATION

a. Count.

When the basis of determination is a count, record the total number of ragweed seeds on the work record and the Results section of the inspection certificate.

Example: Ragweed (Ambrosia) Seeds 0 ct

b. Percentage.

When the basis of determination is a percentage, record the percentage of ragweed seed on the work record and the Results section of the inspection certificate to the nearest tenth percent.

Example: Ragweed (Ambrosia) Seeds 0.0%

7. QUESTIONS

Please direct any questions to the FGIS Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch (PPMAB), at FGISPoliciesProceduresMarketAnalysisBranch@usda.gov.