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Arthur B. Sogn

South Dakota State University

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Editor:
Robert J. Antonides
Extension Economist

Economics Department

• South Dakota State University

• Brookings 57006

• (605) 688-4141

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FARMERS WILL PROBABLY NOT NOTICE THE GRADE CHANGE IN OATS

Effective June 1, 1975, the official U. S. standards for oats will be changed. Many feel the change is an adjustment to what is presently in effect rather than a real change in grade standards. The present pricing system for oats has been to price them on a basis of 38# test weight or better, with discounts for lower test weight and grades lower than Number 2 oats. Because of our present pricing system the proposed grade changes for oats will probably not be noticed by producers, nor are they likely to make substantial changes in the pricing system. The proposed grade changes are:

*The deletion of all class names such as White, Red, Gray, Black or Mixed oats. Classification by genetic background has become increasingly difficult because of some common parentage in varieties, and it has also become less important to buyers. As a consequence, after June 1, 1975, oats will be oats, and will not be distinguished by color.

*After June 1, the minimum test weight for No. 1 oats will be increased from the present 34 pounds to 36 pounds.

*The minimum test weight for No. 2 oats will be increased from the present 32 pounds to 33 pounds.

*The special classification requirement for "heavy oats" will be increased from a minimum of 36 pounds to 38 pounds.

*The special classification requirement for "extra heavy oats" will be increased from the present 38 pounds to 40 pounds or more.

*There is a definite tightening of the allowable limit of ergot in oats from the present 0.1 percent to 0.10 percent. This may seem like no change, but it will mean that oats with 0.11 or 0.12 percent ergot will now be called ergoty and probably discounted June 1, 1975, and thereafter.

It has been difficult for many producers to understand the pricing of oats and with good reason. The legal weight of oats is 32 pounds meaning if you deliver 32,000 pounds of oats to a buyer, you divide the 32,000 pounds by 32 pounds to arrive at 1000 bushels. This has not changed. Presently No. 2 oats needs to weigh only 32 pounds to the bushel, yet if a producer delivers No. 2 oats weighing 32 pounds to the bushel, he will be discounted. The grain trade could offer a price based on 32-pounds oats with premiums for heavier oats but because of the predominance of heavy oats in recent years, it was thought more reasonable to price the oats based on 38-pound oats, and then discount the fewer lighter oats received. This does not mean of course that the pounds of oats in a load are divided by 38 to determine the bushels. The load pounds are in all circumstances divided by 32 to determine the number of bushels of oats. Thirty-two pounds will continue to be the legal weight for oats even when the No. 2 testweight requirement for oats goes to 33 pounds June 1, 1975.

Oats may weigh the required 38 pounds to the bushel and still be discounted, sometimes severely, because of foreign material (most everything but oats, wild oats and other grains), heat-damaged kernels, moisture, mixture

of other grains, weathering, weevils, garlick and a musty or sour odor.

Another new development in oats during the last couple of years has been the premium offered by some buyers for high protein (15% or more) oats. It is possible the price for all grains, including oats, will be based on protein content sometime in the near future. Many of 1974 crop oats had a protein content of about 20 percent. Also many new varieties are bred with high protein as well as high yield in mind.

GRADES, GRADE REQUIREMENTS, AND GRADE DESIGNATIONS

§ 26.256 Grades and grade requirements for oats.

(See also § 26.258.)

Grade	Minimum limits		Maximum limits		
	Test weight per bushel	Sound oats	Heat-damaged kernels	Foreign material	Wild oats
	<i>Pounds</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
U.S. No. 1....	36.0	97.0	0.1	2.0	2.0
U.S. No. 2....	33.0	94.0	.3	3.0	3.0
U.S. No. 3....	30.0	90.0	1.0	4.0	5.0
U.S. No. 4....	27.0	80.0	3.0	5.0	10.0
U.S. sample grade -- --	U.S. Sample grade shall be oats which--				
(a)	Do not meet the requirements for the grades U.S. No. 1, 2, 3, or 4,				
(b)	Contain more than 7 stones which have an aggregate weight in excess of 0.2 percent of the sample weight or more than 2 erotalaria seeds (<i>Crotalaria spp.</i>) per 1,000 grams of oats or more than 16 percent of moisture,				
(c)	Have a musty, sour, or commercially objectionable foreign odor (except smut or garlic odor), or				
(d)	Are heating or otherwise of distinctly low quality.				

¹ Oats that are slightly weathered shall be graded not higher than U.S. No. 3.

² Oats that are badly stained or materially weathered shall be graded not higher than U.S. No. 4.

The U. S. standards for oats to become effective June 1, 1975, are shown in the table. A sample of

oats can meet all the requirements for No. 1 oats except one, but that one factor established the lower grade. For example you may have 36-pound oats, 97 percent sound oats, but have 3.0% heat-damaged kernels. The heat-damage factor would give you No. 4 oats.

For all oats that are shipped to a grain terminal the U.S. standards apply. The standards and resulting grade are important because grade as well as test weight determines price. In most instances of oats not shipped to a terminal, such as much of the trucked oats, the most important factor is test weight. Other factors in the oats grade need only be reasonable. Truck market oats while not often sold on U.S. standards can in some factors be more demanding than terminal grades. Truck oats usually tolerates very little discoloration, hardly any wild oats and practically no noxious weed seeds. It is safe to say there is not a good truck market for oats that does not look good.

Again, legal weight is the number of pounds of normal grain assumed to be in a bushel container, and although the average test weights of some grains have changed, the legal weights have not. Therefore, load weights are divided by 32# for oats, 48# for barley, 56# for corn, rye, flaxseed, and 60# for wheat and soybeans, in order to determine the bushels in a load. Test weight is different in that it is a grading factor only.

Arthur B. Sogn, Extension Economist--Grain Marketing

Cooperative Extension Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture
South Dakota State University
Brookings, South Dakota 57006

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