

By: Springer

S.B. No. 677

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to the administration of seed and plant certification in
3 this state by the State Seed and Plant Certification Council and the
4 Texas Crop Improvement Association.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. Section 61.007, Agriculture Code, is amended by
7 adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

8 (c) A person may not:

9 (1) sell or offer for sale in this state seed or plants
10 with labeling or packaging accompanying the seed or plants using
11 the terms "certified seed," "from officially inspected fields,"
12 "state crop improvement agency inspected," "approved seed,"
13 "approved plants," "approved sods," "approved trees," "inspected
14 fields," "foundation seed," "certified plants," or terms having the
15 same meaning, unless the seed or plants have been certified by a
16 seed certifying agency as Foundation, Registered, or Certified seed
17 or plants;

18 (2) represent the person to be a registered plant
19 breeder or approved producer of Foundation, Registered, or
20 Certified seed or plants unless the person has been registered or
21 approved by a seed certifying agency;

22 (3) sell or offer for sale in this state Foundation,
23 Registered, or Certified seed or plants that are not in compliance
24 with applicable laws or standards adopted by a seed certifying

1 agency; or

2 (4) sell or offer for sale seed or plants represented
3 to be certified in explicit oral or written statements or by
4 misleading oral or written statements if the seed or plants have not
5 been certified or have not been certified as being of the class of
6 which they are represented by a seed certifying agency.

7 SECTION 2. Section 62.001, Agriculture Code, is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 Sec. 62.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

10 (1) "Association" means the seed certifying agency
11 authorized under Section 62.008(a) to certify seed and plants in
12 this state [~~"Board" means the State Seed and Plant Board~~].

13 (2) "Certified [~~The term "certified~~] seed" or
14 "certified plant" means a seed or plant that has been determined by
15 a seed or plant certifying agency to meet agency rules and standards
16 as to genetic purity and identity.

17 (3) "Council" means the State Seed and Plant
18 Certification Council.

19 (4) "Plant" includes plant parts.

20 SECTION 3. Section 62.002, Agriculture Code, is amended to
21 read as follows:

22 Sec. 62.002. STATE SEED AND PLANT CERTIFICATION COUNCIL
23 [~~BOARD~~]. (a) The State Seed and Plant Certification Council [~~Board~~
24 ~~is an agency of the state. The board~~] is composed of:

25 (1) one individual, appointed by The [~~the president~~
26 ~~of~~] Texas A&M University System vice chancellor for agriculture,
27 from the Department of Soil [~~Soils~~] and Crop Sciences [~~Department,~~

1 ~~Texas Agricultural Experiment Station~~, Texas A&M University;

2 (2) one individual, appointed by the dean of the
3 College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, [~~president~~
4 ~~of~~] Texas Tech University, from the Department of Plant and Soil
5 Science [~~Sciences, Texas Tech University~~];

6 (3) one individual, elected [~~appointed~~] by the members
7 of the association [~~commissioner~~], approved by the council
8 [~~licensed~~] as a Texas Foundation, Registered, or Certified seed or
9 plant producer who is not employed by a public institution;

10 (4) one individual, elected [~~appointed~~] by the members
11 of the association [~~commissioner~~], who sells Texas Foundation,
12 Registered, or Certified seed or plants;

13 (5) one individual, elected [~~appointed~~] by the members
14 of the association [~~commissioner~~], actively engaged in farming but
15 not a producer or seller of Texas Foundation, Registered, or
16 Certified seed or plants; and

17 (6) the head of the association [~~seed division of the~~
18 ~~department~~].

19 (b) The members described by Subsections (a)(1), (2), and
20 (6) serve [~~An individual appointed from a state university or the~~
21 ~~department serves~~] on the council [~~board~~] as [~~an~~] ex officio
22 members [~~member~~]. A member serves for a term of two years and until
23 a successor has qualified. Members serve without compensation but
24 are entitled to reimbursement by the association [~~state~~] for actual
25 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

26 (c) A member whose employment is terminated with the
27 association or the university [~~agency or department~~] from which the

1 member was appointed or who ceases to be engaged in the business or
2 professional activity that the member was elected [~~appointed~~] to
3 represent vacates membership on the council [~~board~~].

4 (d) The council shall elect [~~commissioner shall designate~~]
5 a member of the council [~~board~~] as the chair [~~chairman~~] to serve in
6 that capacity at the pleasure of the council [~~commissioner~~]. The
7 council [~~board~~] annually shall elect a vice chair [~~vice-chairman~~]
8 and secretary. The council [~~board~~] shall meet at times and places
9 determined by the chair [~~chairman~~].

10 [~~(c) Appointments to the board shall be made without regard~~
11 ~~to the race, color, disability, sex, religion, age, or national~~
12 ~~origin of the appointees.]~~

13 SECTION 4. Sections 62.004(a) and (b), Agriculture Code,
14 are amended to read as follows:

15 (a) The council [~~board~~] may establish, not inconsistent
16 with federal law, the eligibility of various kinds and varieties of
17 seed and plants for genetic purity and identity certification and
18 the procedures for that certification.

19 (b) The council [~~board~~] may establish standards of genetic
20 purity and identity, not inconsistent with federal law, for classes
21 of certified seed and plants for which the council [~~board~~]
22 determines that standards are desirable. In establishing the
23 standards, the council [~~board~~] may consider all factors affecting
24 the quality of seed and plants.

25 SECTION 5. Section 62.005, Agriculture Code, is amended to
26 read as follows:

27 Sec. 62.005. APPROVAL [~~LICENSING~~] OF PRODUCERS OF

1 FOUNDATION, REGISTERED, OR CERTIFIED SEED. (a) A person who wants
2 to produce a certified class of seed or plant for which the council
3 [~~board~~] has established standards of genetic purity and identity
4 may apply to the council for approval [~~board for licensing~~] as a
5 Foundation, Registered, or Certified producer of seed or plants.
6 To be approved [~~licensed~~] as a producer, a person must satisfy the
7 council [~~board~~] that:

8 (1) the person [~~he or she~~] is of good character and has
9 a reputation for honesty;

10 (2) the person's [~~his or her~~] facilities meet council
11 [~~board~~] requirements for producing and maintaining seed or plants
12 for the certification generations desired; and

13 (3) the person [~~he or she~~] has met any other council
14 [~~board~~] requirements as to knowledge of the production or
15 maintenance of seed or plants for the certification generations the
16 person wishes to produce [~~for which he or she applies to be~~
17 ~~licensed~~].

18 (b) The council [~~board~~] may adopt standards [~~rules~~]
19 governing the production and handling by approved [~~licensed~~]
20 producers of certified classes of seed and plants to ensure the
21 maintenance of genetic purity and identity.

22 (c) Approval [~~A license~~] to produce Foundation, Registered,
23 or Certified seed or plants is not transferable and is permanent
24 unless revoked by the council as a result of a violation of
25 applicable law or standards governing the production and handling
26 of seed or plants [~~as provided in this chapter~~]. A person approved
27 [~~licensed~~] as a producer of Foundation, Registered, or Certified

1 seed or plants is eligible to produce certified seed or plants, as
2 applicable [~~provided in the license~~], of the class the person is
3 approved to produce [~~for which he or she is licensed~~] or of any
4 lower class of certified seed or plants, as determined by the
5 council [~~board~~].

6 (d) An application for approval [~~licensing~~] as a
7 Foundation, Registered, or Certified producer of seed or plants
8 must be accompanied by a fee, as determined by the council [~~provided~~
9 ~~by department rule~~].

10 SECTION 6. Section 62.006, Agriculture Code, is amended to
11 read as follows:

12 Sec. 62.006. REGISTRATION OF PLANT BREEDERS. (a) A person
13 engaging in the development, maintenance, or production of seed or
14 plants for which standards of genetic purity and identity have been
15 established by the council [~~board~~] may apply to the council [~~board~~]
16 for registration as a plant breeder. The applicant shall apply on
17 forms prescribed by the council [~~board~~] and shall include with the
18 application a registration fee, as determined by the council
19 [~~board~~]. To be registered as a plant breeder, a person must satisfy
20 the council [~~board~~] that the person is skilled in the science of
21 plant breeding. The council [~~board~~] may require skill to be shown
22 by evidence of accomplishments in the field and may require an oral
23 or written examination in the subject.

24 (b) A certificate of registration is not transferable and is
25 permanent unless revoked by the council as a result of a violation
26 of applicable law or standards governing the production and
27 handling of seed or plants [~~as provided in this chapter~~].

1 SECTION 7. Section 62.008, Agriculture Code, is amended to
2 read as follows:

3 Sec. 62.008. CERTIFICATION OF SEED AND PLANTS. (a) The
4 Texas Crop Improvement Association is the seed certifying agency
5 authorized to officially certify seed and plants in this state. The
6 association shall comply with standards and procedures established
7 by the council in accordance with the Federal Seed Act (7 U.S.C.
8 Section 1551 et seq.) to assure the genetic purity and identity of
9 the seed and plants certified [~~department is the certifying agency~~
10 ~~in Texas for the certification of seed and plants~~].

11 (a-1) The association shall perform seed and plant
12 certification work on a financially self-supporting basis.

13 (a-2) The association [~~department~~] shall employ a
14 sufficient number of inspectors to carry out the inspection
15 provisions of this chapter. Inspectors must meet qualifications
16 set by the council [~~board~~].

17 (b) A person who is approved by the council [~~licensed~~] as a
18 Foundation, Registered, or Certified seed or plant producer or who
19 is registered as a plant breeder is eligible to have seed or plants
20 of an eligible class and variety certified by the association
21 [~~department~~]. On request by an approved [~~a licensed~~] producer or a
22 registered plant breeder to have seed or plants certified, the
23 association [~~department~~] shall inspect the producer's or
24 registrant's fields, facilities, and seed or plants. Inspection
25 may include tests approved by the council [~~board~~] and carried out by
26 inspectors under the authority of the association [~~department~~].

27 (c) After inspection, if the association [~~department~~]

1 determines that the production of seed or plants has met the
2 standards and requirements [~~rules~~] prescribed by the council
3 [~~board~~], it shall cause to be attached to each container of the
4 product a label identifying the seed or plant and the certified
5 class and including other information required by law or by the
6 council [~~statute or by rule of the board~~]. The council [~~department~~]
7 shall prescribe the format of the label.

8 (d) The association [~~department~~] shall fix and collect a fee
9 for the issuance of a certification label in an amount necessary to
10 cover the costs of inspection and labels.

11 SECTION 8. Section 62.009, Agriculture Code, is amended to
12 read as follows:

13 Sec. 62.009. SEED AND PLANTS FROM OUTSIDE THE STATE. (a)
14 The council [~~department~~] may adopt requirements [~~rules~~], including
15 testing [~~requirements~~] and standards, which must be met before seed
16 or plants represented to be of a certified class may be shipped into
17 the state for distribution in the state. The requirements [~~rules~~]
18 adopted shall be designed to ensure buyers in the state of having
19 available certified seed and plants of known origin, genetic
20 purity, and identity and shall correspond to appropriate standards
21 [~~rules~~] used in certifying seed and plants produced in Texas.

22 (b) The council [~~department~~] may require inspections by the
23 association of seed and plants represented to be of a certified
24 class and shipped into the state for distribution in the state. The
25 association [~~and~~] may collect fees to cover costs of inspection, as
26 determined by the council [~~department~~]. The council [~~department~~]
27 may require inspection fee payment before distribution in the

1 state.

2 (c) A person may not distribute in this state seed or plants
3 represented to be of a certified class and shipped into the state
4 for distribution in the state, unless the person has first complied
5 with any requirements [~~rules~~], including testing [~~requirements~~],
6 adopted by the council [~~department~~] for seed or plants shipped into
7 the state.

8 (d) A person may not sell or offer for sale in this state
9 seed or plants represented to be of a certified class and shipped
10 into the state for distribution in the state, unless the seed or
11 plants have been certified by an official certifying agency in the
12 state, province, or country of origin or have been certified by the
13 association [~~department~~].

14 (e) Seed or plants shipped into the state for distribution
15 in the state which are represented to be of a certified class and
16 which are found by the association [~~department~~] after investigation
17 to violate the requirements of this section are restricted from
18 distribution[. ~~In addition, the department may order the seed or~~
19 ~~plants in violation confiscated and retained under general~~
20 ~~supervision of the department. An owner or consignee of restricted~~
21 ~~or confiscated seed or plants may appeal the order by filing an~~
22 ~~appeal within 10 days of the order. Appeal is in the county court of~~
23 ~~the county where the seed or plants are restricted or were~~
24 ~~confiscated. The appeal in county court is by trial de novo. If no~~
25 ~~appeal is filed as provided in this section or if after an appeal in~~
26 ~~county court, the department's action is not reversed, the~~
27 ~~department may destroy confiscated seed or plants].~~

1 (f) The council may recognize a certification issued by a
2 seed certifying agency in:

3 (1) another state or territory of the United States;

4 or

5 (2) a country, province, or territory not under the
6 jurisdiction of the United States government.

7 SECTION 9. Chapter 62, Agriculture Code, is amended by
8 adding Section 62.0095 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 62.0095. COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES. The
10 council or association may request the department or the United
11 States Department of Agriculture to investigate or aid in the
12 investigation of any violation of this chapter.

13 SECTION 10. Sections 64.005(a) and (b), Agriculture Code,
14 are amended to read as follows:

15 (a) The State Seed and Plant Certification Council [~~Board~~],
16 as constituted under Section 62.002 [~~of this code~~], is the board of
17 arbitration for complaints filed under this chapter.

18 (b) As a board of arbitration, the State Seed and Plant
19 Certification Council [~~Board~~] shall conduct arbitration as
20 provided by this chapter. The arbitration board may be called into
21 session by the Texas Crop Improvement Association [~~commissioner~~] or
22 the chair [~~chairman~~] of the State Seed and Plant Certification
23 Council [~~Board~~] to consider matters referred to the arbitration
24 board by the association [~~commissioner~~] or the chair [~~chairman~~].

25 SECTION 11. Section 64.006(f), Agriculture Code, is amended
26 to read as follows:

27 (f) In the course of its investigation, the arbitration

1 board or any of its members may:

2 (1) examine the purchaser and the seller on all
3 matters that the arbitration board considers relevant;

4 (2) grow to production a representative sample of the
5 seed through the facilities of the Texas Crop Improvement
6 Association [~~commissioner~~] or a designated university under the
7 association's [~~commissioner's~~] supervision; or

8 (3) hold informal hearings at the time and place the
9 chair [~~chairman~~] of the State Seed and Plant Certification Council
10 [~~Board~~] directs, with reasonable notice to all parties.

11 SECTION 12. The following provisions of the Agriculture
12 Code are repealed:

- 13 (1) Section 62.0021;
14 (2) Section 62.0022;
15 (3) Section 62.0023;
16 (4) Section 62.0024;
17 (5) Section 62.0025;
18 (6) Section 62.0026;
19 (7) Section 62.0027;
20 (8) Section 62.004(c);
21 (9) Section 62.0065;
22 (10) Section 62.010;
23 (11) Section 62.011; and
24 (12) Section 64.005(c).

25 SECTION 13. On the effective date of this Act:

- 26 (1) the State Seed and Plant Board is abolished;
27 (2) the State Seed and Plant Certification Council and

1 the Texas Crop Improvement Association shall assume the powers and
2 duties assigned by Chapters 62 and 64, Agriculture Code, as amended
3 by this Act; and

4 (3) the Department of Agriculture and the former State
5 Seed and Plant Board shall transfer all records of the department's
6 and board's activities under Chapters 62 and 64, Agriculture Code,
7 to the State Seed and Plant Certification Council and the Texas Crop
8 Improvement Association.

9 SECTION 14. Except for the addition by this Act of Section
10 61.007(c), Agriculture Code, the changes in law made by this Act may
11 not be construed to affect Chapter 61, Agriculture Code.

12 SECTION 15. The changes in law made by this Act apply only
13 to an offense committed on or after the effective date of this Act.
14 An offense committed before the effective date of this Act is
15 governed by the law in effect when the offense was committed, and
16 the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For
17 purposes of this section, an offense was committed before the
18 effective date of this Act if any element of the offense occurred
19 before that date.

20 SECTION 16. This Act takes effect January 1, 2022.