

**GROWING SEED CROPS FOR  
UJAMAA COOPERATIVE FARMING ALLIANCE  
GROWER'S AGREEMENT**



APPROVED by UCFA Seed Operations Working Group on MAY 8, 2024

This document lays out the various expectations and commitments involved in seed production for Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance (UCFA). Growers agree to abide by the commitments outlined below, and UCFA agrees to do the same. Please contact your designated UCFA contact (listed below) with any questions or concerns.

Grower Name	
Grower Email	
Grower Phone	
Grower Address (for deliveries)	
Best day/time/ method for contact:	

- Grower has filled out the UFCA Grower Intake form [\[LINK\]](#)

UCFA Contact Name	
Contact Email	
Contact Phone	
Contact Seed Hub	
Best day/time/ method for contact:	

## 2024 Seed Contracts [w/ two examples in bold & italics]

Variety	Crop (and Latin name)	Isolation Distance	Minimum Size of Growout	Who provides the seed stock?	Additional Notes	Expected Delivery Date	Percentage Compensation per Packet
<b><i>'Bush Table King' Acorn</i></b>	<b><i>Squash (Cucurbita pepo)</i></b>	<b><i>½ mile</i></b>	<b><i>~50 plants</i></b>	<b><i>Grower</i></b>	<b><i>Unlikely to cross with other squash species.</i></b>	<b><i>Nov 15 2024</i></b>	<b><i>25%</i></b>
<b><i>Ultracross</i></b>	<b><i>Okra (Abelmoschus esculentus)</i></b>	<b><i>1000 ft</i></b>	<b><i>~100 plants</i></b>	<b><i>Ujamaa</i></b>		<b><i>Oct 15 2024</i></b>	<b><i>35%</i></b>

(Fill out this page again if grower is to receive more than 5 crops)

## COMMITMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

1. **Choosing Seed Crops:** In Winter (for most annual crops) and Summer (for fall-seeded crops), UCFA and the grower will determine which varieties will be grown. The grower makes a commitment to grow them, with a target for quantity of plants (listed in chart above under “Size of Growout”). Please see this [Seed Keeping Chart](#) for useful information on most crops (we appreciate Truelove Seeds for the use of their Seed Keeping Chart!). Considerations include which varieties:
  - are culturally important to the grower and/or UCFA,
  - grow well on their farm or in their region;
  - can be safely isolated to prevent unwanted cross-pollination, and
  - can be grown in large enough quantities and with enough bed space for a worthwhile seed harvest size.

2. **Initial Seed Stock:** If needed, UCFA will provide the grower with sufficient initial stock seed at no cost. Regular growers for UCFA are encouraged to save their own stock seed of crops that they intend to grow again in subsequent years, and to let UCFA know if this is not possible so we can hold some in reserve.

3. **Risk of Cross-Pollination:** The grower agrees to contact UCFA if there are any other crops of the same species being grown closer than the required isolation distance (listed above) for that crop. This notification should be made prior to the planting of the seed crop or as soon as the grower discovers a nearby unwanted crop. Hand-pollination may be possible to salvage your crop. UCFA reserves the right to reject any seed crop that may have been cross-pollinated with nearby crops — including those observed being grown by a neighbor or growing wild.

Reach out **immediately** to your UCFA contact to discuss advice on next steps, such as alternative isolation/pollination strategies, if isolation appears threatened.

4. **Commitment to Seed Quality:** The grower agrees to monitor regularly for the presence of off-type plants and/or diseased plants, to rogue off-types (kill/remove the entire plant(s)) as recommended by UCFA, and to report occurrences of any off-types or diseases as soon as noticed. Grower agrees to implement any preventative recommendations offered by UCFA contact person.

The grower commits to growing a large enough population to maintain healthy seed stock. See the [Seed Keeping Chart](#) for the population requirements.

NOTE ON TOBACCO: Growers who smoke tobacco (or who work with smokers) agree to follow preventive measures to ward off Tobacco Mosaic Virus from affecting solanaceous seed crops (i.e. tomatoes, peppers, etc).

5. **Photos and Descriptions:** Quality photos of the plants at their harvest stages and throughout their life cycle enable us to sell your seeds through the website. The grower therefore agrees to take photos of their seed crop for the UCFA catalog if

requested below by UCFA contact person. *See attached Photograph Guidelines document for tips on photographing seed crops in the field.*

Photos requested? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ (to be filled out by UCFA contact)

Requested photo details (if applicable):

UCFA also requires catalog descriptions on the website to encourage customers to buy your seeds. UCFA may request certain information from the grower to create or improve a catalog description.

Descriptive data requested? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ (to be filled out by UCFA contact)

Requested description details (if applicable):

#### 6. **Incentive Payments:**

First 3 years: During your first 3 years as a grower for UCFA, we will send you \$25 for planting each crop. This is a guaranteed payment as long as you plant, even if you experience a crop failure.

Is this Grower in their first 3 years growing for UCFA? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Photographs and descriptions. If photos are requested, UCFA will send you \$25 total for any number of photos sent to your UCFA contact (we recommend sending at least five). You will receive an additional \$25 if any of your photos are used on the website, in the catalog, or for any other UCFA marketing. Grower hereby agrees to UCFA using any photographs of UCFA crops however UCFA sees fit.

7. **Timing of Seed Shipment:** Our wish is to receive fully dried and cleaned seeds by November 1st, if not sooner. Seeds received after that date are difficult to list in time for our January catalog launch since final cleaning and germination testing can take 2-3 months! Growers therefore agree to do their best to send cleaned, dried, well-labeled seeds by November 1st, if not sooner.

Please follow the Guidelines for Bulk Seed Shipment (attached). In summary,

- Seeds must be double-bagged.
- Seeds must be shipped with proper padding/insulation/sealing to prevent spillage and damage.
- A label should be placed both inside and outside the package noting CROP TYPE (e.g. pea), VARIETY (e.g. 'Tall Telephone'), DATE AND YEAR OF HARVEST, and YOUR NAME.

UCFA does not reimburse shipping costs unless approved by UCFA in advance.

8. **Seed Cleaning:** Growers should do their best to fully clean their seed harvests, eliminating as much chaff (plant material), immature seed, and moldy or discolored seeds as possible. If necessary, UCFA staff will spend up to 30 minutes per variety doing some final seed cleaning so that our customers receive seeds with no chaff and higher germination rates. With hundreds of varieties in our catalog this can take us several weeks to accomplish! So please send them as clean as possible. We will deduct the cost of additional labor from your seed payment. Seeds that arrive inadequately cleaned may not be listed in the catalog in a timely manner. Please reach out to your UCFA contact if you need seed cleaning help.

9. **Germination Testing:** We send our seeds to be tested in a certified USDA lab as required by law. Germination testing requires at least 400 seeds be tested. If seeds arrive without a valid germination test, UCFA will remove 400 seeds without compensation to the grower. Testing can take 2-3 months. Your seeds must pass the germination test to be listed in our catalog. See the federal minimum germination rate for your crops here: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/7/201.31>

Every year, seeds must be germination tested again. This test will require another 400 seeds, and seed lots that fall below the federal standards may not be sold.

If at any point the seeds fail the germination testing, Seed Shop will contact the growers and may return seeds upon request.

If you conduct your own USDA-approved germination tests, please provide written documentation, which must include month, year, and germination percentage.

10. **Payment/Profit Sharing:** Once a year, UCFA sends back a percentage of our sales for each variety you successfully provided for the catalog. [This spreadsheet details profit-share rates](#) for most common crops. Communicate in advance with your UCFA representative for any crop not listed on the spreadsheet. With your payment, UCFA will also include an itemized report so you can track how well your seeds are selling.

If multiple growers submit seed lots of the same variety, UCFA will determine which lot is sold first (based on size, quality, arrival date, germination rate, etc).

11. **Promoting Our Growers:** We promote our growers through quarterly and annual publications, in our [MEET OUR GROWERS](#) gallery on our website, and through social media. We may ask you to provide photos and quotations.

12. **Education/Mentorship:** UCFA offers seed production support primarily through our online and hands-on classes and workshops. Individual mentorship may be available on a case-by-case basis. Contact your UCFA representative for more information.

## UCFA GROWER'S AGREEMENT

PRINT Grower's Name \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT Name of Farm/Organization (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Grower's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT UCFA Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

UCFA Contact Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Addendum: Seed Grower Timeline

## TIMELINE

We should sync this to the [Ujamaa Seed Ops Seasonal Schedule](#), which does specify things about annuals vs. biennials

### Timeline for Spring-Planted Crops:

WHEN	WHO	WHAT
January-February	UCFA & Grower	Agree on annual varieties to be grown. This can actually happen any time before it's too late to plant the seed crops for that season, but we prefer to have these conversations early so everyone can prepare appropriately.
March-May	Grower	Seeds planted.
While growing	Grower	Photos of the plant at various stages, with a special focus on the plant when gardeners/farmers would harvest for food, medicine, etc.
While growing	Grower	Report any crop failures or diseases.
At full seed maturity	Grower	Begin seed harvesting and cleaning.
Up until October	Grower	Mail cleaned seeds to UCFA.
November-December	UCFA	Any additional cleaning, send off for germ testing.
December	UCFA & Grower	If new product, assemble description and photos. If new grower, collect grower information for packets and web.
January	UCFA	Add product to website and begin selling.

### Timeline for Fall-Planted Crops:

June: Begin communication about fall-planted crops (biennials, winter grains and legumes)

July/August: Finalize all contracts for fall-planted crops.

August/Sept: Growers plant their fall-planted crops.

While growing: Send photos of the plants at various stages. Report any crop failures.

May/June/July: Seed harvest.

July: Ship seeds to the Seed House.

July/August: Additional cleaning if needed, then send the seed off for germination testing (~4-8 weeks)

Sept/Oct: Add product to the website and begin selling.



# Addendum: Guidelines for Bulk Seed Shipment

WE WANT YOUR SEEDS TO ARRIVE SAFELY WITHOUT DAMAGE IN TRANSIT. Follow these guidelines, which are written in the wake of many lost and damaged seeds.

You also have the option of delivering seeds by hand. Coordinate personal deliveries with any member of the UCFA Seed House in Maryland, or ask your local UCFA Seed Hub if they can assist.

1. Seeds must be fully dried before shipment. Moist seed can develop mold while being shipped.
2. Labels must be both inside (with the seeds) and outside (on the bag), and should include
  - crop type
  - variety name
  - date of harvest (including the year!)
  - your own name and/or the name of your farm

Label the outside of the bag by simply writing on it with a permanent marker. This is easier if you write while the bag is empty, before filling it with seeds.

Label inside the bag by writing this information onto a slip of paper or cardboard and including it in the bag with the seeds. This internal label is harder for us to find (since it's covered in seeds), but is important in case the outside becomes water-damaged and the label rubs off.

BEAN Black Turtle Promise Johnson Harvested Aug-Sept 2024	Clemson Spineless OKRA (9/24/2024) Yordan Molina
Thelma Sanders Sweet Potato SQUASH (Cucurbita Pepo) Oct 2024 [Jay Tilde]	SORGHUM - Della Cheri Smith 8/10/24 - 8/22/24 harvested

3. Double bag the seeds in airtight ziplock bags. Seal the bag securely and then also TAPE IT SHUT, to prevent it from popping open if your package is smushed.

Alternatively, you could put the seeds into a different kind of air-tight plastic container (e.g. a small plastic jar) and then put that into a ziplock bag, or coat it in tape. Make sure the seeds are double-contained in fully sealed plastic, against potential water damage.

4. Bag each different variety of seed separately. Once you have all your seeds double-bagged & double-labeled, prepare the cardboard box you are going to ship the seeds in.
5. Pad ALL SIX SIDES of your box with bubble wrap, crinkled paper, and/or reused styrofoam. This padding is to protect the plastic bag(s) of seeds from being punctured, even if the cardboard box is punctured. Fill the box with padding until the seeds do not shake around much when you close the box and vigorously shake it.

If you have multiple bags of seed, it might make sense to tape the bags together. This might make it easier to keep them all in the center and the padding on the edges. If the box gets a small hole in it, individual bags are unlikely to fall out.

6. Tape the box very thoroughly. It *is* reasonable to cover the entire box with tape. When being loaded onto trucks, boxes are often stacked 12 feet high, and the bottom boxes can and will split open along their edges. The tape will hold the box together (and your bags of seed inside) even if it is squished down.
7. Ship it to this address.

Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance  
ATTN: GROWER SEED DELIVERY  
1908 Catherine Fran Drive  
Accokeek, MD 20607

Be sure to also include an accurate return address.

# Addendum: Photograph Guidelines

TIPS: Make sure your shadow or camera shadow isn't in the photo; try some in full sun, some with your body fully shading photo image field; try on cloudy days. Take photos at all stages of growth. Take photos of whole fruit or vegetable; take photos of sliced fruit or vegetable; take photos of produce during and after cooking.

[Here are the tips written by Irena:

1. Diffuse light is best. When taking photos outside, if possible, take photos either on an overcast day, or during the couple of hours before sunset, or during the couple of hours after sunrise, or in a place with even, but not dense, shade. Dappled shade and strong, direct sunlight both emphasize shadow lines and both make it hard to balance the colors so as to simultaneously give a good view of what is in the shadows as well as what is in the light. If you're using flash, supplement it with as much diffuse light as you can. If you're taking photos inside, it helps to use whatever big flat white thing you have on hand to reflect some light from the nearest window back onto your subject.
2. More is very often better. Some folks say that the best way to make people think you're a great photographer is to only show people the best 1% of the photos you take. When I take pictures for SESE, I feel like that would far too small a percentage; I would guess I use one in 30. And even if you just take a couple per variety, that's a lot better than zero.
3. Vary your style. For example, you could take a picture - or pictures - of your crop in your field, ready for harvest, then of a fruit in your hand, then of several fruits on hay and/or on a piece of cloth and/or on a plate. You could take a some pictures from directly above your subject some from the side.
4. Showing various aspects of the variety is generally nice if it doesn't make the photo really busy. For example, most of the watermelon photos on our website show both the flesh and the rind. Leaves are often nice, too, and can make an attractive backdrop for fruits.
5. Composition matters. Many photographers use the "rule of thirds," putting their subjects on or near any of four lines that divide the area of the photo into nine equal parts like a tic-tac-toe board. But when photographing products for sale, roughly centering the product is at least as popular.
6. These are guidelines, not rules. Some fabulous pictures are taken in full, midday sun. Some fabulous pictures fly in the face of the normal "rules" of composition. Some fabulous pictures of vegetables just show you the outside of one fruit. Some fabulous pictures were taken when film was expensive, by photographers who couldn't afford to take ten times the shots they would show."]

Attach Profit-Share Sheet - [Ujamaa Seed Crop Profit-Share Rates](#)

Attach Federal Germination Standards

Attach info sheet on Tobacco Mosaic Virus