



AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

POLICY NOTE

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Minister for Housing, Urban Development
and Agriculture

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market prices of agricultural produces before sowing and also before the harvest. The information is published in news papers, broadcast through radio and television. Price forecasting is done by the centre for 24 agricultural crops like; Maize, Sorghum, Ragi, Cumbu, Blackgram, Bengalgram, Greengram, Groundnut, Gingelly, Sunflower, Coconut, Copra, Cotton, Potato, Carrot, Beetroot, Tomato, Bhenidi, Brinjal, Small onion, Turmeric, Coriander, Red chillies, Banana (Nendran & Poovan). The price forecast has been proven to have 95% reliability.

Technology and Market Advisories are also sent through mobile phones by the e-Extension Centre, through 'm-kissan portal'. During the year 2014-15, 6,45,02,766 SMS relating to 9000 pieces of market information were sent to the farmers. Advisories are continuously given to farmers.

Trade and Intellectual Property Protection department of the university has filed for patenting of (i) Cleaner for onion seed, (ii) Pre-thresher, Thresher and Pre-cleaner for onion umbels and (iii) Herbal soup dispensing machine during the year 2014-15.

5. SEED CERTIFICATION & ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

Use of certified seeds of good quality is essential for higher agricultural productivity. This department is pioneer at national level, in implementation of quality control programmes in seed production and distribution.

Following activities are carried out by this Department.

- ❖ Certification of seeds of notified crop varieties, in accordance with the Indian Minimum Seed Certification Standards (IMSCS).
- ❖ Enforcement of seed legislations for ensuring quality seed distribution.
- ❖ Seed testing in notified seed testing laboratories.
- ❖ Imparting training to persons involved in the seed industry on seed legislations and certified seed production.
- ❖ Implementation of Organic Certification programme as per the standards of National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP).

This department has also the unique distinction of having the maximum number of (33) notified Seed Testing Laboratories out of

128 notified Seed Testing Laboratories in the Country. Seed Testing Laboratory, Coimbatore has been upgraded to International levels i.e., by obtaining accreditation from International Seed Testing Association, Switzerland (ISTA) in the year 2014.

1. Seed Certification

Seed certification agency functions in accordance with the provisions of The Seeds Act 1966 and The Seeds Rules 1968. The Seed Certification wing of this department carries out certification of seed farms to ensure adherence to critical parameters prescribed under Indian Minimum Seed Certification Standards (IMSCS). During the year 2014-15, Seed Certification wing has been strengthened with provision of new certification kits, tag storage racks and digital cameras.

During the year 2014-15, 53,154 hectares of seed farms were registered and 88,832 MT of various crop seeds were certified. It is proposed to register an area of 57,000 hectares and certify 1,10,000 M.T of seeds during the year 2015-16.

Ten new jeeps have been provided for the Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors of the Department at a cost of Rs 57.50 Lakh during the year 2014-15.

2. Seed Quality Control

The role of seed quality control wing is to ensure that the seeds sold in the state adhere to the provisions in various seed legislations. Seed sellers in the State are issued with licences by this Department.

At present, there are 9456 licensed seed selling points in the State. These seed selling points are inspected at least seven times in a year by the seed inspectors.

During the year 2014-15, 58,022 seed samples were drawn for checking adherence to the prescribed quality. Substandard seeds from 1,334 lots weighing 1,501 MT, valued at Rs.8.45 crore were stopped from sale. 270 cases were also registered against the defaulters. It is proposed to conduct 68,500 seed selling point inspections and to take 66,000 seed samples for quality check during the year 2015-16.

3. Seed Testing

Seed testing laboratories evaluate seed parameters such as germination, physical purity, moisture, seed health and other distinguishable varieties. Genetic purity of seed lots is determined at grow out test farms, glass houses, and DNA finger print laboratories.

Thirty three notified seed testing laboratories are functioning under the control of

this department. Of these, 29 seed testing laboratories are functioning in the districts and 4 are functioning at the Directorate. A notified Grow out Test farm is functioning at Kannampalayam, Coimbatore.

One Referral Laboratory with Bt toxin (Protein toxin present in Bt cotton) analysis facility, a Glass house and DNA Finger print laboratory is functioning at the Directorate. The notified Seed Testing Laboratory, Coimbatore has been accredited by the International Seed Testing association (ISTA) in the year 2014.

Certification of ISTA accredited lab is mandatory for export and import of seeds from the Country. Globally 135 labs are accredited by ISTA. Only 6 labs are accredited in the Country of which, the Coimbatore Seed Testing lab of this department is the only Government lab with this accreditation. A total number of 95,917 seed samples were analyzed, in the year 2014-15 by these laboratories.

Testing of seed samples is being continued in the year 2015-16.

4. Training

Training wing takes up capacity up gradation on latest trends in seed production, seed certification and seed legislations to the seed producers, seed dealers and farmers. The officials of the department are given orientation

and refresher trainings. 46,614 persons have been trained in the financial year 2014-15.

It is proposed to train 47,000 persons during the year 2015-16.

5. Organic Certification

The Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department (TNOCD) certifies farms with organic cultivation. Farms registered under the Department for Organic Certification are inspected and evaluated as per guidelines of National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP). Farmers involved in organic farming can register as an individual, group or corporate categories for Organic Certification.

Every year, training on National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) and standards is given by this department to farmers registering for organic certification. In addition, during the year 2014-15, organic cultivators were taken to Cochin, for participating in the International Organic Trade Fair. During the year 2014-15, 29,677 acres of farms were registered for organic certification.

It is proposed to register an area of 31,000 acres under Organic Certification programme during the year 2015-16.