

CHAPTER X

SEED CERTIFICATION

1. Introduction

Seed is the major component of the technology package in Agriculture. With a view to protect the farming community, a strong seed certification programme and quality control mechanism is a must. For effective functioning of food production schemes all the inputs need to be managed effectively. To derive the full potential of all inputs seed plays a primary role. In order to make available adequate quantity of quality seeds at right time to the farming community the Department of Seed Certification is implementing Seed Certification, Seed quality control, Seed testing and Training schemes.

2. Seed Certification

Seed Certification is a regulatory process designed to maintain and make available quality seeds to the farming community. The main function of seed certification is to encourage the production of adequate quantities of genetically pure and good quality seeds, particularly high potential, improved and hybrid varieties of different crops. In order to achieve this requirement, the Seed Certification Department carries out the certification work in various crop varieties notified under The Seeds Act 1966 and in accordance with the provisions of the Seed Rules 1968 to maintain the quality of the seeds produced in the state.

Although the quantum of certified seed production has doubled in the last one decade, there exists a wide gap between the requirement and availability. By increasing the production of certified seeds through private sector, the total certified seed production could be increased. Hence the private sector seed production will be concentrated in order to fill up the gap between availability and requirement of quality seeds. Out of the total certified seeds produced, 62.51 percent is contributed through private sector, 34.32 percent is contributed by Government and 3.17 percent is contributed through Quasi Government sector. During the year 2008-09 a quantity of 67288 metric tons of seeds were certified up to March 2009. During 2009-10 it is proposed to certify a quantity of 82,000 metric tons of seeds.

3. Seed Quality Control

Seed quality control is an essential and indispensable part of a seed programme. To protect the interest of the farmers seed trade has to be constantly monitored by inspecting the seed dealer points periodically, and have a constant vigil on the marketing of seeds by taking seed samples in the seed lots distributed to the farming community. The seed samples drawn are sent for analysis in the notified Seed Testing Laboratory and based on the results Legal actions or Departmental actions are being initiated against the defaulters. In accordance with the provisions of Seeds Act 1966, Seed Rules 1968 and Seeds (Control) Order 1983, the Seed Quality Control wing of this department is regulating the quality of seeds sold. Besides this, the seed selling licenses are also issued to the Seed dealers under Seed (Control) Order 1983. At present 6623 seed selling points are available in our state. During 2008-09, 51344 seed selling point inspections were carried out and 37186 seed samples were drawn for quality check up to March 2009. During 2009-10 it is proposed to make 65000 seed selling point inspections and to draw 60000 Seed samples for quality check.

4. Seed Testing

Seed testing is an essential and indispensable aspect of Quality Control and Seed Certification programme. Based on the International Seed Testing Associations procedures

the Seed testing is being carried out to analyse the factors like germination, physical purity, moisture, seed health and admixture of other distinguishable varieties. At present Eleven Notified Seed testing laboratories are functioning in our state. Certified seed samples, Official seed samples and the Service samples sent by the farmers, seed dealers and seed producers are tested in these laboratories. During 2008-09, 68211 number of seed samples were tested up to March 2009. During 2009-10 it is proposed to test 75000 number of seed samples.

During 2009-10 it is proposed to establish Seed Testing Laboratories in the eighteen districts namely Cuddalore, Dindigul, Karur, Kanyakumari, Krishnagiri, Namakkal, Nagapattinam, Perambalur, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Tiruvallur, Thoothukudi, Tiruvarur, Tiruvannamalai, Theni, Vellore, and Virudhunagar so as to have Seed Testing facilities in all the districts of our state.

To determine the genetic purity of given seed lot, the grow out test is conducted at Kannampalayam (Coimbatore) farm and at glass house attached to the Directorate of Seed certification. This test is conducted for the crop seeds where it is a pre-requisite for certification and also for the samples received from the Seed Inspection wing. A DNA finger print Laboratory was also established at the Directorate of Seed Certification to obtain quick confirmation of variety.

5. Training

To encourage the quality seed production and distribution the following training programs are organised by the Training Wing of this department.

5.1. Orientation training: Training is given to the newly joined technical Officers of this Department on Seed Certification procedures, field inspections, identification of crop varieties, processing, sampling, tagging, and procedures involved in Seed Testing and Seed quality control.

5.2. Refresher Training: The already positioned technical officers of this department are trained on the latest techniques on seed production and on identification of newly released varieties.

5.3. Training to Seed Producers: The training is given on the seed production aspects to the seed producers. The training includes seed growers who are mostly small and marginal farmers.

5.4. Quality control Training to Seed Dealers: Training is given to the seed dealers not only on the quality maintenance in storage and selling of seeds but also on the regulatory aspects of seed legislation.

The number of persons trained under various training programs is increasing year by year. During 2008-09, 34549 persons were trained up to March 2009 and it is proposed to train 34500 persons during 2009-10.

6. Organic Certification

The word Organic means from a living thing and farming with the philosophy of organics is to make production system alive with long life. It is not just to replace fertilizers and pesticides with manures and predators but it is an ongoing dynamic process for making

healthy soil and ultimately a vital living system of the world. Organic farming is based on harmony with nature or near to nature approach.

Organic farming is a system which avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetic inputs (such as fertilizers, pesticides, hormones, feed additives etc) and to the maximum extent feasible rely upon crop rotations, crop residues, animal manures, off-farm organic waste, mineral grade rock additives and biological system of nutrient mobilization and plant protection. Approximately 75 million acres worldwide are now farmed organically.

Tomorrow's ecology is more important than today's economy. To sustain agricultural production by way of restoring soil fertility and re-establishing natural balances, Department of Organic Certification was established by additionally designating the Department Seed certification in the year 2007-2008. Department of Organic Certification carries out inspection and certification of organic production system in the state in accordance with National Programme for Organic Production launched by the Govt. of India in the year 2000 and notified in October 2001 under the Foreign Trade and Development Act (FTDR Act) Organic Certification addresses a growing world wide demand for organic food. It intends to assure quality and to promote commerce. Organic Certification essentially aims at regulating and facilitating the sale of Organic products to consumers. In Tamilnadu Organic Certification shall be extended to crop production, Animal husbandry, Food Processing, input manufacturing, Trade and Export.

Necessary action has been taken by Department of Organic Certification to obtain accreditation from APEDA (Agriculture and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority) New Delhi, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The Department of Organic Certification also imparts free training to registered organic farmers on National Standards for Organic Production and TNOCD standards and procedures to be followed to obtain necessary certification.

Up to March 2009, 7673 farmers possessing 25047.61 acres of land have been registered under Organic certification. This includes 98 individual farmers possessing 5270.84 acres of land, 30 group of farmer containing 7575 farmers and holding 19609.70 acres, four corporate sectors holding 167.07 acres, have so far registered under Tamil Nadu Organic certification Programme. During 2009-2010 it is proposed to register an area of 18000 acres under Organic Certification.