

CHAPTER IX

SEED CERTIFICATION

Introduction

Seed is the basic and most important input for increasing Agricultural production. The Seed Control Order is essential to provide quality seeds and to avoid admixtures in seeds.

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

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 Indian 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, only around 20 percent of the total requirement could alone be covered with certified seeds. About 10 percent of the seed requirement is met with labeled seeds. 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 2007-08 as against the target of 60,500 metric tones of seeds to be certified, a quantity of 52,891 metric tones of seeds were certified upto February 2008. During 2008-09 it is proposed to certify and distribute 62,500 metric tones of seeds under various crops.

3. Seed Quality Control

The demand for seed among the farming community is in the increasing trend. 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.

During the restructuring of the Departments functioning under Agriculture, including the Department of Seed Certification and Organic Certification, Considering the importance of Seed Certification and Organic Certification the numbers of posts were increased from 250 to 344. Based on this the annual average number of inspections carried out per selling point had gone up from two times to five times. At present 6623 seed selling points are available in our state. During 2007-08 as against the target of 34,500 selling points

inspection and 24,000 seed samples to be drawn, 34,138 selling points have been inspected and 26,215 seed samples have been drawn for analysis up to February 2008. During the current year up to February 2008, a quantity of 1195.317 metric tones of seeds belonging to 1042 seed lots and worth Rs.231.954 lakhs have been found to be sub-standard and stopped from sales. Based on this 354 cases were filed in the court of law and in which 218 cases were so far disposed in favour of the Government. Due to strengthening of the Seed Inspection wing the Seed Quality Control activities will be intensified and as a result the quality seeds distributed to the farming community will be ensured. During 2008-09 it is proposed to make 40,000 seed selling point inspections and to draw 28,500 seed samples.

4. Seed Testing

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. Seed testing is carried out in the notified seed testing laboratories. The Seed testing results are significantly important for the successful implementation of Seed Certification programs and seed law enforcement programs. 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. For analyzing service seed samples a fee of Rs.30.00 per sample is being collected. During 2007-08 51,445 samples have been tested and during 2008-09 it is proposed to test 63,500 number of seed samples.

To provide the Seed Testing facilities during 2008-09 to all the districts it is proposed to establish Seed Testing Laboratories in all the eighteen districts namely Cuddalore, Dindigul, Karur, Kanyakumari, Krishnagiri, Namakkal, Nagapattinam, Perambalur, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Tiruvallur, Thoothukudi, Tiruvarur, Tiruvannamalai, Theni, Vellore, Virudhunagar where Seed Testing Laboratories are not available.

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.

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. During 2007-08, 37 persons have been trained and it is proposed to train 150 persons during 2008-09.

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. During 2007-08, 213 persons have been trained and it is proposed to train 280 persons during 2008-09.

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. During 2007-08, 22,848 persons have been trained and it is proposed to train 23,850 persons during 2008-09.

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. During 2007-08, 9,596 persons have been trained and it is proposed to train 9,720 persons during 2008-09.

The number of persons trained under various training programs is increasing year by year. During 2007-08, 32,694 persons have been trained and it is proposed to train 34,000 persons during 2008-09.

6. Organic Agriculture

In Tamilnadu Organic Agriculture is receiving increasing attention among farmers, producers, processors, Traders, Exporters and consumers. Growing consciousness of health hazards due to the possible contamination of farm products from use of chemical fertilizers have immensely contributed to the revival of this form of farming.

The conventional agriculture not only destroyed the soil living organisms but also deteriorated soil fertility resulting in less increase in production against the quantity of input supply. This lead to focused and well directed development of organic agriculture in Tamilnadu.

7. Organic Certification

Government of Tamilnadu has created a separate Department of Organic Certification in the month of May 2007 for the purpose of Inspection and Certification of Organic Production system in the State. Organic Certification in the state is carried out in accordance with National Programme for Organic Production launched by the government of India in the year 2000 and notified in October 2001 under the Foreign Trade and Development Act.

The Tamilnadu Organic Certification Department functions under the control of the Director of Seed Certification and its headquarters is based at Coimbatore. The Organic farms where synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, plant growth regulators, Livestock feed additives and genetically modified organisms are not used are registered under Organic Certification. So far, 353 farmers possessing 4671 acres have registered under organic certification. This includes 32 individual farmers possessing 3180.38 acres of land, group of farmers containing 120 farmers and holding 490.62 acres, one corporate sector with 201 farmers and having 1000 Acres all belonging to private sector have so far registered under Tamilnadu Organic Certification.

Apart from carrying out inspection and certification work, the Department of Organic Certification have developed Quality manual, operating manual and manual on general standards on par with ISO 65 standards. Actions have been initiated to obtain accreditation from APEDA (Agriculture and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority) New Delhi, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The Department of Organic Certification also imparts training to registered organic farmers on standards and procedures to be followed to obtain necessary certification. During 2007-08 4,671 acres of farms were registered under the Organic Certification programmed and it is proposed to register up to 10,000 acres during 2008-09 under organic certification.