

10. SEED CERTIFICATION AND ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

1. Introduction

'As you sow so you reap' goes the old saying. Seed is a vital input to increase the production and productivity of agricultural crops. Using the other technical inputs like irrigation, pesticide and fertilizer, etc in the right proportion will step up agricultural productivity. New high yielding hybrid seeds and quality certified seeds play vital role in increasing agricultural production. The seeds used should not only possess high germination, but also should be genetically pure. Making available adequate quantity of quality seeds at the time of sowing for the right season is vital for increasing agricultural production.

The certified seeds are produced by the Government, Co-operatives and also by Private agencies. The role of private seed producers in the production of certified paddy seeds has increased considerably over the years and paddy seeds have accounted for 92% of the total certified seed production. The private seed producers are encouraged to produce more certified seeds to meet the quality seeds requirement in Tamil Nadu. In order to achieve the above objectives the Department is implementing Seed Certification, Seed Quality Control, Seed Testing, Training and Organic Certification schemes.

2. Seed Certification

This Department carries out the functions of the Seed Certification Agency in accordance with the provisions of The Seeds Act 1966 and The Seeds Rules 1968, to maintain the quality of seeds produced in the State. It is a regulatory process designed to secure, maintain and make

available, the prescribed levels of seed quality namely, germination, physical purity, genetic purity and seed health. During 2010-2011, the quantity of certified seed produced was 93551 M.T, of which 23.94% was contributed by Government, 2.87% by Quasi Government and 73.19% by Private seed producers.

The private sector seed production need to be promoted further to meet the gap between availability and requirement of quality seeds. During the year 2010-2011, 93551 M.T of seeds were certified against the target of 84630 M.T of seeds. It is proposed to certify 95000 M.T of various crop seeds during 2011-2012.

3. Seed Inspection

It is essential to ensure distribution of quality seed material to the farming community. The basic objective of the Seed Legislation is to regulate the quality of seeds sold to farmers. The Seed Inspection wing of this Department is in charge of regulating the quality of seeds sold in accordance with the provisions of The Seeds Act 1966, The Seeds Rules 1968, The Seeds (Control) Order 1983 and The Environment (Protection) Act 1986.

To ensure the quality of seeds distributed to the farmers seed selling points are inspected periodically, seed samples are drawn from seed lots kept for sale and sent for analysis to the notified Seed Testing Laboratories. Based on the results, legal action is being initiated against the defaulters. The Seed Inspection wing is issuing licenses for Seed dealers under the provisions of The Seeds (Control) Order, 1983.

During 2010-2011 as against the target of 67000 seed selling point inspections, 62502 inspections were

made and against the target of 65000 seed samples to be drawn 55016 seed samples were drawn for quality check. There are 9122 licensed seed selling points functioning in the State.

During 2010-2011, 1261 seed lots of 1770.820 M.T worth ` 700 lakhs were found sub standard and stopped from sale to farmers. Based on this 523 cases were filed in the court of law of which 431 cases were decided in favour of the Government. It is proposed to make 67500 seed selling point inspections and to draw 65000 seed samples for quality check during the year 2011-2012.

4. Seed Testing

Seed testing plays a pivotal role in modern agriculture. It is being carried out to analyze 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 very important for the successful implementation of Seed Certification and Seed Law Enforcement programmes. Apart from certified seed samples and samples received from the seed quality control wing, the service samples sent by the farmers, seed dealers and seed producers are also tested in these laboratories.

During the year 2010-2011, a total number of 85334 seed samples were tested as against the target of 75000 seed samples. During the year 2011-2012 it is proposed to analyze 86000 seed samples.

To determine the genetic purity of a given seed lot, the grow out test is conducted at the Grow Out Test Farm situated at Kannampalayam (Coimbatore). Genetic Purity Tests are conducted for the certification of parental, hybrid and foundation one class of cotton seeds and also for the

samples received from the Seed Inspection wing. DNA (Finger Print) Laboratory is functioning at the Directorate of Seed and Organic Certification which enables quick genetic confirmation of crop varieties.

5. Training

To promote quality seed production and distribution the following training programmes are organized by the training wing of this Department.

5.1 Orientation Training

Training is given to the newly recruited 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 to 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 on quality maintenance in storage, selling of seeds and on the regulatory aspects of seed legislation.

The number of beneficiaries under various training programmes was 41673 during the year 2010-2011 and it is proposed to train 41800 persons during the year 2011-2012.

6. Organic Certification

Organic farming is a production system, which eliminates the use of synthetically compounded fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, livestock feed additives and genetically modified organisms. It is the key to the sound development of sustainable environment. It minimizes environmental pollution and maximizes the use of renewable natural resources. Organic farming not only restores soil fertility, but also reestablishes natural balance and thereby conserving bio diversity. Organic farming is also a solution to global warming.

Organic Certification is a certification process for producers of organic agricultural products and generally involves a set of production standards for growing, storage, processing, packaging and shipping for which a written assurance is given by the certification body. The agricultural produce from organic farms are highly nutritive, contains more antioxidants and has no residual toxins of fertilizers, pesticides, antibiotics and hormones. Organic Certification intends to assure quality of organic products and aims at regulating and facilitating the sale of organic products to consumers. It addresses the growing worldwide demand for organic food.

Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department (TNOCD) was established in the year 2007-2008 to carryout inspection and certification of organic production system in accordance with National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP), which was launched by Government of India in the year 2000 and notified in October 2001 under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act 1992. Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department has been accredited by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority (APEDA), New Delhi,

Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The accreditation number allotted to Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department is NPOP/ NAB/ 0019. Organic Certification carried out by this Department is on par with the standards of European Union. Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department also imparts free training to registered organic farmers on National Standards for Organic Production and Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department Standards.

During the year 2010-2011, 28115 acres of land have been registered under Organic Certification as against the target of 28000 acres. This includes 427 individual farmers possessing 8204 acres of land, 37 groups containing 7945 farmers holding 19488 acres and 27 corporate firms holding 423 acres. During 2011-2012 it is proposed to register an area of 30000 acres of land under Organic Certification.