

CHAPTER X

SEED CERTIFICATION AND ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

1. Introduction

Seed plays a vital role among the Agricultural inputs. Based on this, repeated efforts have been taken up continuously to increase the production of quality seeds. Agricultural inputs like irrigation and fertilizers only help to draw out the yield potential of the seed. In order to make available adequate quantities of quality seeds at the right time to the farming community, the Department of Seed Certification is implementing Seed Certification, Seed Quality Control, Seed Testing and Training programmes.

2. Seed Certification

Encouraging the production and certification of adequate quantities of genetically pure and good quality seeds, particularly of high potential improved and hybrid varieties of different crops are the main aims of Seed Certification. Though there has been a constant increase in the production of certified seeds over the years, the Department is taking necessary steps to meet the multifold increase in the quality seed requirement. Due to the encouragement of Private seed producers, the quantity of certified seeds has doubled during the last one decade. Because of this, the availability of quality seeds to the farming community without any shortage has been ensured. Out of the total certified seeds produced, 69.18 percent is contributed through private sector, 28.83 percent is contributed by Government and 1.99 percent is contributed through Quasi Government sector. During the year 2009-10 a quantity of 69943 metric tones of seeds were certified.

During 2010-11 it is proposed to certify a quantity of 82,500 metric tones of seeds under various crops. The breeder seeds required are obtained from Tamilnadu Agricultural University, Other Universities and Research Centers.

3. Seed Inspection

Seed quality control is essential for the Seed programme. The Department implements Seed Quality Control activities based on The Seeds Act 1966, The Seed Rules 1968 and The Seeds (Control) Order 1983. Seed selling licenses are issued based on the provisions under The Seeds (Control) Order 1983. Seed trade should be monitored to ensure the quality. Seed selling points are inspected at periodical intervals and samples are drawn from the seed lots kept for sale and sent for analysis to the Seed Testing Laboratories. If the results are found to be substandard, proper Legal or Departmental actions are proceeded against the concerned persons. At present about 8043 seed selling points are functioning in our State. During 2009-10, 53602 seed selling point inspections were carried out and 46319 seed samples were drawn for quality check. Proper Legal and Departmental actions were proceeded against 1740 numbers of Seed lots, which were found substandard. 442 Cases were filed in the Court of Law and of which 328 Cases have been decided in favor of the Government and 114 cases are pending in the court of law. For the violations under Seed Legislations, Legal Actions have been taken up and a fine of Rs.5,24,000 has been collected from the defaulters. During 2010-11 it is proposed to make 67,000 Seed Selling Point Inspections and to draw 65,000 Seed Samples for quality check.

4. Seed Testing

To Implement the Seed Certification and Seed Quality Control Programmes, Seed Testing Programme is very essential and much needed. Seed Testing is conducted based on the procedures framed by the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA). Seeds are tested for germination, Moisture, Physical Purity, Seed Health and Other Distinguishable varieties and the results are declared. The Seed testing is conducted at the Notified Seed Testing Laboratories. In Tamil Nadu, at present 11 Notified Seed Testing Laboratories are functioning. Certified Seed Samples, Official Seed Samples and the Service Seed Samples sent by the farmers, Seed Dealers and Seed Producers are tested in the Laboratories. During 2009-10, 64284 number of seed samples were tested. During 2010-11 it is proposed to test 75000 number of seed samples.

Establishment of Seed Testing Laboratories in the 18 districts namely Cuddalore, Dindigul, Karur, Kanyakumari, Krishnagiri, Namakkal, Nagapattinam, Perambalur, Pudukkottai, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Tiruvallur, Thoothukudi, Tiruvarur, Tiruvannamalai, Theni, Vellore, and Virudhunagar are under progress so as to have Seed Testing facilities in all the districts of our state. During 2010-11 these 18 Laboratories will start functioning.

Grow out tests are conducted at the Kanampalayam Farm (Coimbatore) and at the Glass House attached to this Directorate to ascertain the Genetic purity of Seed crops. The Genetic Purity tests are conducted for 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 this Directorate to obtain quick confirmation of variety.

5. Training

In order to enlighten and encourage the officials of the Department, Seed producers and Seed Dealers the following training programmes are being conducted.

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 trainees include 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 2009-10, 38669 persons were trained, and it is proposed to train 38000 persons during 2010-11.

6. Organic Certification

More intensive and economic agriculture production led to wide use of high doses of concentrated chemical

fertilizers and chemical pesticides but insufficient use of organics, leading to negative results, decrease in fertility and soil structure.

Instead of recycling the plant and animal wastes back into the land as fertilizer, we pollute the air and water by using chemical fertilizers and pesticides affecting the environment. Thus Organic farming not only restores soil fertility but also re-establishes natural balance and there by conserve bio diversity.

Organic farming is also a solution to global warming, According to Dr.Christine Jones, one of Australian leading experts of carbon sequestration "by increasing 1% Organic carbon in one ha.of the soil shall remove 88 tones of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by sequestration thus preventing global warming".

The Agricultural produce from Organic farms are not only highly nutritive but also contains more antioxidants and 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 growing world wide demand for Organic food.

Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department (TNOCD) was established in the year 2007 to carry out Inspection and Certification of Organic production system in accordance with National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) launched by Government of India in the year 2000 and Notified in October 2001 under the Foreign Trade and Development Act (FTDR Act).

Tamil Nadu Organic Certification Department has been accredited by APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority), New Delhi, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The accreditation number allotted to TNOCD is NPOP/NAB/0019. Here after Organic Certification carried out by this Department shall be on par with standards of European Union.

TNOCD also imparts free training to registered Organic farmers on National Programme for Organic Production and TNOCD Standards & Procedures.

During the year 2009-10, 21458 acres of land have been registered under Organic Certification against the target of 18000 acres. This included 140 individual farmers possessing 6166 acres of land, 31 farmers groups containing 7973 Farmers holding 14808 acres and others including 19 Government farms, 1 NGO and 2 Corporate sectors holding 484 acres.

During 2010-11 it is proposed to register an area of 21000 acres under Organic Certification.