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National Conference on **Seed Certification**

25th November, 2017
Hyderabad, Telangana

PROCEEDINGS



Organised by

Telangana State Seed & Organic Certification Authority

Department of Agriculture & Co-operation

Government of Telangana

in collaboration with

Department of Agriculture, Co-operation & Farmers Welfare

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

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National Conference on Seed Certification Proceedings

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&

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Proceedings of National Conference on Seed Certification

The National Conference on Seed Certification was organized by the Telangana State Seed & Organic Certification in collaboration with the Government of India on 25th November, 2017 at Hyderabad by involving all State Seed Certification Agencies of the country under the Chairmanship of Dr. B. Rajender, Joint Secretary (Seeds), Government of India to discuss issues pertaining to seed certification. The Directors and their representatives from 20 state seed certification agencies have attended the conference including seed experts namely Dr. Vilas Tonapi, Director, IIMR, ICAR, Hyderabad, Shri R K Trivedi and D G Gupta Former Deputy Commissioners (QC), Dr. S. K. Mohanty, Professor & Head, OUAT, Director (Seeds), UAS, Raichur and PJTSAU, Hyderabad.



INAUGURAL SESSION

25th November, 2017

The National Conference on Seed Certification was organized by the Telangana State Seed & Organic Certification in collaboration with the Government of India on 25th November, 2017 at Hyderabad by involving all State Seed Certification Agencies of the country. The conference was inaugurated by the Dr. B. Rajender, Joint Secretary (Seeds), Government of India in the presence of Shri C. ParthaSarathi, APC & Secretary to Govt. (A&C), Govt. of Telangana, Shri M. Jagan Mohan, IAS, Commissioner & Director of Agriculture, Govt. of Telangana, V. K. Gaur, CMD, NSC Ltd., New Delhi, Dr. K. Keshavulu, Director, TSSOCA, Hyderabad.



The conference was inaugurated with the invocation song followed by lighting the lamp by the chief guest and other invited dignitaries

Dr. K. Keshavulu, Telangana State Seed & Organic Certification Authority (TSSOCA) welcomed the Chief Guest Dr. B. Rajender, Joint Secretary (Seeds), & all the dignitaries, seed experts, Directors and officers from all SSCAs. He briefed the main objectives of conducting this conference and also flagged various issues of seed certification including application of GST to the State Seed Certification Agencies. He also highlighted the importance of quality seed in farming and need of conferences/meetings to discuss about the issue of quality seed production and supply to have productive interactions and deliberations which will help to harmonize the existing domestic seed standards with the international standards



In his welcome address, he also mentioned the progress of implementation of OECD seed certification in the state.

Shri C. Parthasarathi, APC & Secretary to Govt. (A&C), Govt. of Telangana in his introductory remarks, stated that the State of Telangana being the Seed Bowl of India is taking up several initiatives to strengthen the seed sector in the state towards the direction of making the state as a global seed hub. He also applauded the achievements accomplished by the TSSOCA in the field of domestic & international seed certification besides strengthening technical staff and budget provision from the State of Telangana and also organizing several National and International capacity building programmes to strengthen quality control system in the country in general and in Telangana state in particular. He requested the Joint Secretary (seeds) that a decision needs to be taken for strengthening of all State Seed Certification Agencies in the country for betterment of farming community.



He said that the seed scenario of European countries, where utmost care is taken for seed related issues, whereas in our country it is not the case and due to the negligence of some seed companies/organizations several problems are cropping up in the farmers' fields. In addition, the public and private sectors are involved in production of huge quantities of seed but the quality of seed is not being maintained in most of the cases due to various reasons.

He also stressed the importance of breeder seed supply in the country and its production has to be monitored with utmost care and Grow Out Test has to be conducted before supply to seed industry and also Breeder Seed production manuals and standards have to be reviewed and updated.

Further, he accentuated that, there is a need to monitor the entire seed chain as the Breeder Seed is the initial source for further multiplication and moreover its expensive. He also informed that in European countries the separate scientists / wings are involved in the process of varietal development, maintenance breeding, seed multiplication and quality control, in line with developed countries we need to have such system to avoid quality problems in India as well.

He also mentioned that in order to avoid counterfeit tags, TSSOCA has introduced the material for foundation seed tags as they are water & chemical resistance and compatible for bar coding, interstate movement, authorization of seed processing plants. In his address, he also placed a request to Government of India to provide at least Rs.50 crores to the State Seed Certification Agencies to meet the salaries and also made an appeal to all Seed Certification Agencies to initiate organic certification in order to improve the self-sustenance.

He stated that, seed certification started with a motto of quality seed production and hence organizations including public & private companies, State Agricultural Universities, ICAR institutes who are involved in seed production are required to follow the Indian Minimum Seed Certification Standards. All the State Seed Certification Agencies have to be strengthened in order to increase

quality consciousness in the farming community so that real genetic value can be exploited in the farmer's field.

He also stressed on the several fold domination of private seed companies over public sector seed corporations and suggested that there is an immediate need to strengthen the public sector failing which it will face a huge break down in future.

Finally, he suggested that there is a need to discuss some key issues like concept of organizers in seed production and revision & updation of field inspection manuals, auditing of seed testing laboratories, organizing series of such kind of meetings, identification of export potential states for further focus, strengthening of the seed technology departments in SAUs & ICAR. In addition, he proposed to have joint annual meetings of Seed Certification Agencies, National Seed Corporation and Seed Development Corporations to strengthen them to supply the quality seed to the farming community at right time at affordable prices.



Shri V. K. Gaur, MD, National Seed Corporation, New Delhi felt happy for this conference, and mentioned that the time has come to sell seed by number not by weight through improving the quality of seed with advanced technologies and at this juncture, the State Seed Certification Agencies play the major role in quality seed supply. In his address, he made some suggestions like modification of calendar of operations and proper labelling of T/L seed by mentioning the name of the state along with

producer details to trace the place from where the seed is arrived and also emphasised the need of education programmes to farmers about certified seeds through extension system.

He also mentioned the importance of proper planning of seed rolling plan as the excess of breeder seed lying in the godowns due to improper back calculations. He underlined the issue of organizer system that, in some state like Madhya Pradesh, the entire payment goes to the farmer instead of facilitators and in Karnataka the organizer system is removed and hence suggested that only service charges may be paid to the organizers whereas the whole payment should be made to the farmers.

Dr. M. Jagan Mohan, Commissioner & Director of Agriculture, Government of Telangana has also emphasized that the quality seed supply is important so as to meet the food requirement of country as it increases the yield potential of crops from 15-20% therefore quality seed certification system has to be strengthened so as to improve the quality of seed.



Dr. B. Rajender, Joint Secretary (Seeds), Government of India expressed happiness for organising this conference as a common platform for all seed certification agencies and complemented the efforts of TSSOCA and Govt. of Telangana for organizing by involving all the State Seed Certification Agencies and also appreciated for taking several path breaking steps like complete online seed certification process, implementation of OECD seed certification, interstate seed movement, authorization of SPUs and recruiting the required technical staff for effective functioning.



He stressed that, a well-planned seed production plan for the country is the need of the hour and every state should have seed rolling plan for three years in advance, so that the realistic availability of seeds of all varieties/hybrids can be produced year after year to strengthen the seed industry and in turn helps to achieve food security.

He reiterated the points mentioned by APC & Secretary to Govt. (A&C), Govt. of Telangana, he emphasised on importance of quality seed production and also assured to take steps for strengthening of the Seed Certification Agencies by providing required financial assistance to carryout certification programme. He also instructed all the Seed Certification Agencies to submit the budget proposals for the current financial year. He also mentioned that some of the Seed Certification Agencies are not utilizing funds properly and not submitting utilization certificates in time and also asked SSCAs to submit utilization certificates for the budget already released by Govt. of India.

He informed that, the budget would be provided to strengthen the Seed Certification Agencies for improving infrastructure facilities, recruiting technical human resource, upgrading the laboratories and capacity building programmes. He also suggested that, all the Seed Certification Agencies should follow the seed certification procedures without any deviation and work with accountability, honesty and transparency for maintaining the integrity of the seed quality control system.

While, concluding his message, he mentioned that from next year, a joint conference of Seed Certification Agencies and Seed Development Corporations will be organized annually in different parts of the country to discuss on seed quality issues.

SESSION I : SEED CERTIFICATION ISSUES

1. Online Seed Certification: In connection with the Online Seed certification system, the Government of India has been releasing funds since 2010. However, very few State Seed Certification Agencies availed the opportunity and have implemented online seed certification system (complete/partial) and some have not implemented till date. In addition, the Govt. of India has issued a D.O. vide reference No 5-64/2017-SD.IV dated: 28.07.2017 and made it mandatory for seed certification system.

Therefore, the matter was placed for discussion and it was accepted that all the State Seed Certification Agencies should implement complete online seed certification system from April, 2018 without any deviation in order to maintain transparency, honesty and accountability. In addition, a decision was also taken to have uniform online seed certification system through National Information Centre (NIC). Hence, all the SSCAs have to submit their software to NIC through Deputy Commissioner, Quality control, GOI to take further necessary action.

2. Seed Certification Manual: Seed certification manuals were published long back, the same is being used by the State Seed Certification Agencies and some are revised in their own State language. Therefore, there is a need to have uniform certification manuals across the country.

In this regard, the existing drafting committee for uniform certification procedures comprising of two representatives from MSSCA, two from RSSOCA and one Additional Commissioner, NSC with Sri G. Sudershan, Deputy Director of Seed Certification, TSSOCA and Sri Raghuramaiah, Chief Seed Certification Officer, APSSCA was given the responsibility of preparation of manuals in Hindi and English versions. However, it was suggested that it is better to reconstitute the committee by involving seed experts from various State Seed Certification Agencies, State Agricultural Universities and ICAR Institutes.

In this context, all the SSCAs should submit their comments on uniform seed certification procedures by the end of December, 2017 and these comments should be examined by the reconstituted committee by 31st January, 2018 and a final draft should be ready by 15th February, 2018. This draft may be discussed with the stakeholders in the workshop to be held in the last week of February, 2018. After finalization, seed certification manuals should be ready for circulation in the month of June, 2018.

3. Source Seed Verification: Source Seed Verification is a part of seed certification process and it is mandatory to verify the seed source for genuine seed multiplication in order to confirm that the seed used for raising the crop has been obtained from the approved source and conforms to the provisions of class of seed.

In this connection, few states are verifying source seed before sowing and others are verifying after planting. Therefore, the decision was taken that all Seed Certification Agencies should go with 100 % physical verification of source before sowing and confirmation at the time of field inspection for all crops and classes.

4. Cut off Dates: In view of attaining quality seed and to avoid spurious seed, timely completion of operations is very important. All the State Seed certification agencies have prepared their own Calendar of operations as per the local climatic conditions in their respective States. However, most of the State Seed Certification Agencies are not adhering to them. Therefore, the producers are always in a relaxing state as a result spurious seed in the market is found in various states.

In this regard, region, state, season and crop wise calendar of operations are to be prepared and sent to Chairman cum Managing Director, National Seeds Corporation under a copy to Seed division, Govt. of India by the end of 31st December, 2017 for compilation into a booklet for circulation to all the SSCAs by the end of February, 2018.

5. Field Inspections & Seed Processing: Field inspections are meant to verify those factors which can cause irreversible damage to the genetic purity or seed health and it is conducted without prior notice to the seed producer. The aim of seed processing is to improve the quality of seed which is carried out either by cleaning, drying, treating, grading and other operations.

To carry out both the above operations, there is an ambiguity in all the State Seed Certification Agencies over the yardsticks to each Seed Certification Officer (SCO) per season and the extent of areas an SCO can cover during a season. In this regard, the responsibility of finalising yardsticks to the SCOs is given to the committee constituted for preparation of uniformity of seed certification procedures.

6. Staffing Pattern & Cadre: As there is no uniformity in organizational nomenclature/structure/staffing pattern/ cadre & designation of all technical staff in State Seed Certification Agencies, it was decided to prepare an ideal organogram by defining duties of the technical staff under the Chairmanship of Sri R.K.Trivedi, Consultant (Seeds) & I/c. Director (Oilseeds and Crops) along with two or three members.

7. Lot numbers & Traceability: In order to facilitate maintaining seed lot identity, tracing back its origin, handling in stores, transit, etc., construction of seed lot No. is made in four parts with Month-Year code, Production Location Code, Processing Plant Code and Seed Produce Code respectively as per IMSCS.

However, some of the states are following five parts in construction of lot No. which is a deviation from IMSCS guidelines. Hence, it was decided that all the State Seed Certification Agencies should construct the lot No.s with four parts only.

8. Certification Tags: As per the IMSCS, all the Seed Certification Agencies are involved in seed production of Foundation and Certified Seed and issuing white and Azure blue tags respectively for marketing. However, labelled seed is being assigned with opal green colour which is almost similar to the Azure blue colour of certified tag.

Hence, confusion is prevailing between both the Certified and Labelled seed tags. Also, there is a demand from the farming community especially from Telangana state, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra to have a distinct colour to certified seed tag in contrast to the labelled seed tags. In this connection a decision on this will have to be taken separately in future meetings and final decision will be taken by 31st of December, 2017.

9. Certificate in Form II: The Form-II certificate is issued on the receipt of the seed Analysis Report, results of the Grow out Test and after packing, tagging and sealing of certified seeds.

As some of the SSCAs are issuing Form-II's for all certified seed lots (FS&CS) in their State language, problems are being faced by other states to understand the content when the seed lot moves to

other states. Hence, decision was taken to prepare them in three versions, i.e., English, Hindi and State language by keeping the seed user farmers in view.

10. Inter-State Movement: Since the Seed lots under movement were not having any physical identity, the Agricultural Marketing, vigilance and enforcement officials are suspecting the genuineness of the seed under movement and insisting for identity of the lots with labels on each container.

The Govt. of Telangana has issued Government Order vide G.O.Rt.No.813, dated 14.12.2016 of Agriculture & Cooperation (Agri-I) Department, Government of Telangana permitting TSSOCA for implementation of Inter Agency Certification as per Annexure XVI of Seed Certification Hand Book with the red colour label affixed to the containers from Rabi 2016-17.

In this regard, the Govt. of India has constituted a committee with Directors of Telangana State Seed & Organic Certification Authority, Maharashtra State Seed Certification Agency, Karnataka State Seed Certification Agency, Andhra Pradesh State Seed Certification Agency, Hyderabad and RM, NSC, Secundrabad to examine various issues on Inter State movement of unprocessed seed and to give suitable recommendations.

The committee meeting was convened by Dr. K. Keshavulu, Director, Telangana State Seed & Organic Certification Authority on 24.05.2017 in Hyderabad and the following decisions were made.

- In order to ensure movement of genuine seed lots with proper physical identity, the producer should apply for the same to both certification agencies
- Fixing the time frame of 21 days for movement of unprocessed seed
- Indication of state code along with processing plant code in the Lot No. and colour (Scarlet red ISI 72)
- Hereafter the raw seed will be moved from one state to another with an identity in shape of scarlet Red label wherein the details of the seed Lot, No. of containers, Name of the producer and validity will be indicated.
- The raw seed will be moved with the Transfer Certificate issued by the Certification Agency where the seed is produced.
- Hence, for implementation of Inter-State movement by all States, it was informed that the guidelines will be circulated to all the State Seed Certification Agencies at the earliest.

SESSION II : BUDGETARY ISSUES

11. Enhancement of Financial Assistance for SSCAs: As per the Sub-Mission on Seeds and Planting material (SMSP) guidelines, the Assistance for the staff cost for Seed certification Agencies is 25% of the central share with a maximum limit of Rs.50.00 lakh per annum.

However, most of the State Seed Certification Agencies are suffering due to lack of adequate budget and hence, were not be to work effectively. Therefore, the Joint Secretary (Seeds), Govt. of India has decided to support the hike of ceiling limit from 25% to 50% for which he requires strong justifications to enhance the budgets towards salaries etc. In this connection, the Director, TSSOCA has given the responsibility for submitting the proposal to Govt. of India with strong justification for taking necessary action.

12. Production Incentives: In order to encourage certified seed production, incentives have to be provided to certified seed growers for crops with high volume and low Seed Multiplication Ratio i.e., Groundnut and Pulses etc. In this regard, it was decided that, proposals have to be submitted by NSC and APSSDC with strong justification to the Govt. of India for the benefit of farmers.

13. Sale Subsidies for Certified Seed: To encourage use of certified seed and to create demand for certified seed so as to strengthen the State Seed Certification Agencies, it was decided that subsidy will be extended to certified seed users only through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)

14. Awareness about Certified Seed: Awareness among the farming community about certified seed is essential. Therefore, all the State Seed Certification Agencies have to publicize and impart knowledge among the farmers about importance & usage of certified seed through various means.

15. Monitoring of Labelled Seed: Labelled Seed is being produced by different seed companies and its volume have increased to several folds as compared to 1980's & 1990's in the country. The numbers of seed companies are also increasing and some kind of regulation is required. Seed production details, processing details have to be submitted prior to season to the Department of Agriculture under a copy to Seed Certification Agency. Though, the Seed Act-1966 envisages same standards at field & Seed level for label & certified seed, majority of seed companies not bestowing much attention towards quality & adopting short cut methods to market huge quantities of seed as labelled seed, which in most case does not have check on the pedigree, proper processing and test reports.

In view of the existing problems faced due to lack of regulation mechanism on production of Labelled Seed, it was informed that the monitoring will be done as per the IMSCS.

16. Infrastructural Facilities: As per SMSP guidelines, Govt. of India has been providing funds towards infrastructural facilities for most of the State Seed Certification Agencies. However, some are utilizing the facilities while others not hence, there is a need to upgrade the infrastructural facilities in all respects namely establishment of State of Art Seed Testing Laboratories, GOT farms, improvement of Office Automation etc.

In connection to this the Joint Secretary (Seeds) suggested that sufficient funds of about 20 crores are available with the Government of India to improve infrastructural facilities and the share of 100% could be obtained by SSCAs. The Joint Secretary (Seeds) instructed to submit the proposals along with the utilization certificates of previous funds released. The SSCAs also need to send an Audit Report, Progress Report, Finance Report, Utilization Certificates, State share released amount etc. along with the proposal to the Joint Secretary, Government of India.

17. Annual & Technical Meetings: In order to have co-ordination between all SSCAs, the Annual / Seasonal meeting have to be conducted to review the uniform procedures, appraisal on new developments and a close co-ordination have to be maintained.

A decision was taken to fix three locations to conduct these Annual technical meetings i.e., North, South & in an Eastern State. During January/February, 2018 by the Seed Division, GOI and the decision will be taken on these technical meetings.

18. Facilitation of Seed Production Programmes: Most of the seed producing agencies including corporate and multinational national companies (MNCs) in private sector as well as the national and state level seeds corporations in public sector are not able to reach the seed growers in the villages for genuine and quality seed production. They are dependent on middlemen who distribute the source seed and procure the seed from growers and supply to the seed companies. In the process an organizer system has developed and is working since a long time. The so called unofficial organizers/facilitators are playing a major role in every seed production programme of every seed producing agency in the country.

Either, the so called organizer/facilitator system has to be recognized with due responsibilities/accountability OR Production Agreements (PAs) in the form of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should be entered in to between any two seed producing agencies, including national seed corporation and state seed corporations.

So as to improve the Seed production programme the State Seed Corporations must be strengthened and work hand in hand with the Seed Certification Agencies for success of seed production programme of any state. A good cooperation and rapport/balance has to be maintained between these two organizations to curtail unscrupulous/spurious seed circulation in the market.

19. Seed Review Teams: During the pre-independence era and in 1960's 1970's & 1980's several teams were formed for enhancement of seed production programme to know the status of auditing seed supply in the country. Therefore, in the present situation such teams have to emerge for improving the seed production system of the country. To discuss any matter related to Seeds a periodical review with the associated organizations shall be done. The Joint Secretary (Seeds) suggested to form the Seed Review Team as per the provisions of the Seed Act & Government of India. Therefore, a periodical review in the system is essential.

20. Formation of Association of Indian Seed Certification Agencies (AISCA): Formation of association for seed certification agencies in the country like AOSCA, SCST, AOSA and also in African countries, was agreed in 2016 to have a common platform for all seed certification agencies to make coordinated efforts for promoting and facilitating the certification of seeds and planting material in different crop species to meet the seed demands of national and international markets for the benefit of farming community, and also to have a forum to raise and resolve various issues for uniform seed certification procedures in the country by discussing on various seed policies and regulations.

The main objectives of association would be the coordination of functioning of all seed certification agencies for quality seed supply and creation of awareness among the stakeholders, reinforcement of the knowledge about the certification system among the states, initiation of programs supporting seed certification activities including pursuing financial support and organizational excellence, review and strengthening the harmonization of seed certification rules/procedures as per the Seeds Act, assisting member agencies in promotion, quality seed

supply and use of the certified classes of seed and other propagating materials of crop varieties and to cooperate with the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA), Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and international organizations involved in the development of standards, regulations, procedures, and policies to expedite movement of seed and encourage international seed commerce.

The matter was placed for discussion before the house and was accepted the proposal for formation of association and opined that the association should be recognized officially and it should work towards the betterment of seed certification system in the country without deviating from its objectives.

Further, all the Directors of State Seed Certifications Agencies requested to have one time budgetary provision from the Joint Secretary (Seeds), Seed Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

Subsequently, Directors and representatives of all State Seed Certification Agencies convened a separate meeting and decided to have the association with the composition of the seed certification agencies, seed production organizations, national and state seed associations and experts from departments of seed science and technology in the country.

The body of Association will have honorary Chairman as Joint Secretary (Seeds), Government of India and the executive body will have a President who will be a representative of the Seed Certification Agencies elected by the members of association. The Secretary of the association will be a Seed Expert appointed on contract basis and the treasurer of the association will be elected by the association.

The Executive Members of the Association will be the representative of the state seed certification agency and seed producing organizations, seed associations and seed departments from all the corners of country like North, South, Central, West and North Eastern parts and one member from National Seed Corporation and one member from National Seed Association of India.

In view of the above, all the Directors and the representatives of SSCAs has proposed the following body of Association:

Dr. B. Rajender, Joint Secretary (Seeds) as honorary Chairman, Shri C. ParthaSarathi, APC & Secretary, Government of Telangana, as Advisor/Patron, Dr. K. Keshavulu, Director, TSSOCA as President, Shri R.K. Trivedi former Dy.Commissioner (QC) as Secretary, Shri Madhusudhan Sharma, Director, Rajasthan State Seed Certification Agency, Shri Shivaraju, Director, Karnataka State Seed & Organic Certification Agency, Dr. Arvind Nath Singh, Director, Uttar Pradesh State Seed Certification Agency, Shri Bankatesh Narayan Singh, Director, Bihar State Seed Certification Agency, Shri M.P Rowner, Director, Assam State Seed Certification Agency, Shri V. K. Gaur, Managing Director, National Seed Corporation, Shri. M. Prabhakar Rao, Managing Director, National Seed Association of India, Shri N.P Patel, President, Gujarat State Seed Producers Association as Executive Members as members.

21. International (OECD) Seed Certification: The Government of India nominated Designated Authorities for implementation of OECD Seed Schemes with an objective to encourage the use of "quality-guaranteed" seed in OECD participating countries and also to facilitate the import and export of seed by removing the technical trade barriers. This facilitates international trade, establishes collaboration between public and private sector & enables to incorporate International standards for seed certification.

Though 10 Seed Certification Agencies are designated under OECD seed certification, only 2 Designated Authorities namely TSSOCA & RSSOPCA are actively involved in implementation of OECD Seed Schemes. Hence, there is a need to redesign/reframe or to identify 3 to 4 designated authorities in the country that are actively involved in the OECD programme and based on the need in future, the agencies may be re-designated as Designated Authorities at the earliest possible.

22. Capacity Building: The competence of Seed Certification Officers should be built up for efficient working of the organization. The Joint Secretary (Seeds) has informed that for capacity building, funds are available with GOI hence the Seed Certification Agencies have to submit proposal for strengthening the Seed Certification competencies through rigorous & extensive practical training for new appointees, refresher trainings to senior staff, regular workshops, Inter-State exchange programme for staff to acquire latest information on Seed Certification Procedures. In order to improve the seed certification, it was instructed to all SSCAs for submission of proposals at the earliest.

23: Registration of Seed Producers/Growers:

Some State Seed Certification Agencies (SSCAs) are registering and renewing the authorization of seed producing institutions/agencies. Authorization certificates are provided for the seed producers for participation in tenders for supply for seeds in states.

One time registration of seed growers is also being done in some states and Identity cards are issued with unique identification numbers. In the online process of seed certification, it may help a lot in uploading the information of the seed grower, within no time.

A positive signal was given by the Joint Secretary (Seeds) regarding registration/renewal of Seed Producers & the seed growing farmer to glorify the work they undertake. This would be discussed in the Annual Technical Meetings to be held in the next year.

24: Authorization of Seed Processing Plants:

The seed processing is the integral part of seed production programme intended to improve the physical quality of seed and it was made also mandatory in 1970's and the screen sizes for different crops species have also been formulated and incorporated in IMSCS. However, due to development of more varieties and hybrids in almost all the crops there is a need to update the screen sizes for all crop species.

Most of the seed companies are establishing their own seed processing plants with improper machineries & are not following any guidelines. Hence, there is a need to regulate the seed processing activities by authorization of seed processing plants after thorough inspections. In this direction, Govt. of Telangana took the decision to authorize all the processing units of the State.

There should be a regulation on this matter for which the Director, TSSOCA was instructed to prepare the guidelines.

25. Breeder Seed Quality, Monitoring & Standards:

The Breeder seed is the mother seed for subsequent seed classes viz., F/s and C/s, so the quality of these seed classes solely dependent on quality of breeder seed. Hence, the quality of breeder seed should be high & maintained carefully. There must be a strict monitoring over maintenance and production of breeder seed. There should be also GOT or control plot tests for breeder seed before it is supplied for further multiplication & commercialization as like in OECD

seed certification. The new guidelines for breeder seed production and manuals have to be prepared in line with other developed countries. The breeder seed must be packed with proper tags or labels containing information on seed quality parameters. The printing of labels has to be done in Hindi & English Language. There are some complaints regarding the quality of breeder seed, so a letter is to be addressed to ICAR regarding breeder seed supply.

26. ODV & Grow Out Test:

The primary objective of ODV & GOT is to determine the genetic purity of variety before multiplication and commercialization. Most of the SCAs are following ODV test as a measure of genetic purity, there is some ambiguity in this test regarding its correlation with results of GOT. It was suggested to conduct ODV Test for Self Pollinated Varieties and also to revise ODV Standards. The Grow Out Test to be conducted for cross pollinated varieties & for all hybrids and also need to revise Genetic purity standards. It was decided that revision of genetic purity standards is to be attended at the earliest for both GOT & ODV tests and should be included in the revised Manuals and IMSCS.

27: Regulation for Substrata:

The germination substrata quality is being checked where low quality material was detected since several firms supplying low quality substrata. As the germination results of seed totally depend on quality of substrata hence its standardization is needed for its accurate planting quality detection in seed testing. It shall be covered as a part of monitoring and included in the committee of manuals to review for preparing the guidelines for substrata.

28: Revalidation of Seed Lots:

The extension of validity period of certified seed is defined for six months at each subsequent validation. It was agreed to revalidate the seed lots even after its expiry date based on the tests results of germination. The matter has to be reviewed and the amendments have to be made in the Minimum Seed Certification Standards.

29: Availability of Notified varieties/ hybrids in Seednet Portal:

Release & notification of hybrids or varieties is mandatory for certification. Regulation of the quality of seeds, notification of varieties is a precondition. Further, all the seed certification officers should be well versed with traits or characters of release and notification of varieties. Therefore, the Joint Secretary (Seeds) instructed to upload/update all the notified varieties in the Seednet Portal immediately for ready reference for the purpose of quality seed production.

30: Responsibilities of Genetic Purity of Certified Seed:

It is well known that the genetic purity maintenance of certified seed is highly essential and this refers to the percentage of contamination by seeds or genetic material of other varieties or species. It is the responsibility of the seed producer to take appropriate measures to ensure genetic purity of the seed crop and often requires cooperation & coordination among different companies and growers producing seed of the same species in the same planting locations and time.

The Genetic purity should be checked during post control i.e. Grow-Out Tests. The certified seed lots shall be subjected to genetic purity assessment up to 5-10% before releasing in the market.

SESSION III: TARIFFS & TAXES

31: Applicability of Goods & Service Tax to SCAs:

It was felt that proper understanding is needed regarding the Goods & Service Tax (GST) and its applicability. There is a confusion prevailing due to recent amendments made by the Central Government enforcing an uniform Tax system to all through Goods & Service Tax (GST) on Seed Certification System. The matter was discussed in detail and further the Joint Secretary (Seeds) suggested that the Services of 'Seed Testing & Certification of Agricultural Seed' which is the basic object of the Corporation, is exempted from charge of GST.

The same was discussed and decided that services which were exempted under Service Tax regime are continued to be the exempted under Goods & Service Tax. Further, the Joint Secretary (Seeds) informed that the registration under GST is a must due to reverse charge mechanism where it declines the credibility & is not preferable by most of the dealers as they in turn have to pay the tax charge from their own pocket. If the Certification Agencies has not registered under GST, then the supplier cannot quote their name under any purchase to the Government. Thus, the State Seed Certification Agencies are liable to pay GST on some activities & the Registration under the GST Act is necessary. However, the matter has to be discussed with the Finance Ministry.

32: Income Tax (IT) related issues of SCAs:

Most of the certification agencies were exempted from Income Tax up to 2008-2009 by virtue of Section 12 A registration. Later, from 2009 onwards due to amendments in IT rules in the Section 2 (15) A & B the exemption provided was forgone. Registration granted earlier was withdrawn by IT Authorities w.e.f. 2009-10 onwards. The certification agencies are fighting for exemption of Income Tax.

As per the opinion of the auditor in-charge it was opined that all the State Seed Certification Agencies shall made a representation collectively to the Ministry of Finance requesting to resort the exemptions on Income Tax for the activities being performed by Seed Certification Agencies. In view of this, a common and high pitch appeal shall be made with the representation from a candidate not less than the Cadre of Special Chief Secretary along with a minister preferably so that the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) shall not reject the application. Strong reasons are to be framed for the counter argument in advance to hasten up the process of exemption. The Agriculture Marketing Committee (AMC) is getting the benefit of IT for similar activities. Hence, a reference of AMC may also be quoted for Income Tax exemption.

If Income Tax is not exempted then 34% of the tax shall be paid to the Government on the surplus obtained by each State Seed Certification Agencies. Hence, all States shall make a common appeal on the single platform

The income tax is exempted in certain States such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka etc., under Section 12 A in respect of similar activities. By eliciting the factual position & obtaining the documentary evidence for Income Tax exemption from the exempted agencies the appeal may be made by all other Seed Certification Agencies.

33: Property Tax (PT) issues of SCAs:

The Property Tax is being paid every year by the certification agencies and an appeal can be made to exempt Property Tax referring Goods & Service Tax & Income Tax. The property tax is a State subject hence; the local Authority has to review the issue. The Joint Secretary expressed that as the property tax is a State matter, if any help needed can be provided from center in this regard. If required a letter may be sent to all the States for providing exemption on Property Tax.

GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SEED CERTIFICATION





Organised by

Telangana State Seed & Organic Certification Authority

Department of Agriculture & Co-operation
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