

Seed Certification

- It is a process designed to maintain and make available to the farmers continuous supply of high quality seeds and propagating materials of notified kinds and varieties of crops, so grown and distributed to ensure the physical identity and genetic purity.
- It is legally sanctioned system for quality control of seed multiplication and production.
- The main function is to encourage the production of adequate quantities of genetically pure and good quality of seeds, particularly high potential, improved and hybrid varieties of different crops.

History of Seed Certification in India and Assam

- The Field evaluation of seed crop and its certification started with the establishment of National Seed Corporation in 1963.
- A legal status was given to seed certification with the enactment of first Seed Act in the year 1966 and formulation of Seed Rules in 1968. The Seed Act of 1966 provided the required impetus for the establishment of official Seed Certification Agencies by the States.
- Maharashtra was the first State to establish an official Seed Certification Agency during 1970 as a part of the Department of Agriculture, whereas Karnataka was the first state to establish the Seed Certification Agency as an autonomous body during 1974.
- Assam State Seed Certification Agency was established on 1st January, 1985 under the Seed Act, 1966 and Registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- At present 22 states in the country have their own Seed Certification Agencies established under the Seed Act 1966.
- In India, Seed certification is voluntary but labelling is compulsory.
- Certification shall be conducted by the Certification Agency notified under Section 8 of the Seed Act, 1966.

Objective of Seed Certification

The major objective of the Seed Certification is to ensure the acceptable standards of seed viability, vigor, purity and seed health. A well organized seed certification should help in accomplishing the following three primary objectives.

- The systematic increase of superior varieties.
- The identification of new varieties and their rapid increase under appropriate and generally accepted names.
- Provision for continuous supply of comparable material by careful maintenance.

Eligibility Requirement for Seed Certification

Seed of only those varieties which are notified under Section-5 of the Indian Seed Act, 1966 shall be eligible for certification. Any variety to become eligible for seed certification should meet the following requirement:

1. General Requirements
 - (i) Should be a notified variety under Section-5 of Indian Seed Act, 1966.
 - (ii) Should be in the production chain and its pedigree should be traceable.
2. Field Standards: It includes the selection site, isolation requirements, spacing, planting ratio, border rows, etc.
3. Specific requirements: Presence of off-types in any seed crop, pollen-shedders in Sorghum, Bajra, Sunflower, etc. Shedding tassels in maize crosses, disease affected plants, objectionable weed plants, etc., should be within the maximum permissible levels for certification.
4. Seed Standards: Minimum seed certification standards have been evolved crop-wise.

Certification Agency

Certification shall be conducted by the Certification Agency notified under Section 8 of the Seeds Act, 1966.

Grant of Certificates by Certification Agency

Section 9 and 10 of the Seeds Act, 1966

- Any person selling, keeping for sale, offering to sell, bartering or otherwise supplying any seed of any notified kind or variety may if he desires to have such seed certified by the certifying agency, apply to the certification agency for the grant of certificate for the purpose.
- Every application under sub-section (1) shall be made in such form, shall contain such particulars and shall be accompanied by such fee as may be prescribed.
- On receipt of any such application for grant of certificate, the certification agency may, after such enquiry as it thinks fit and after satisfying itself that the seed to which the application relates conform to the minimum limits of germination and purity specified for that seed under clause (a) of section 6, grant a certificate in such form and on such conditions as may be prescribed.

Revocation of Certificate

If the certification Agency is satisfied, either on reference made to it in this behalf or otherwise, that

- The Certificate granted by it under section 9 has been obtained by misrepresentation as an essential fact.
- The holder of the certificate has, without reasonable cause, failed to comply with conditions subject to which the certificate has been granted or has contravened any of the provisions of this Act or rules made there under, then without prejudice to any other penalty to which the holder of the certificate may be liable under this Act, the certification Agency may, after giving the holder of the certificate an opportunity of showing cause, revoke the certificate.