

I Requirements for Success

Success or failure in seed certification activities hinges on how the Seed Certifying Authority is organized and operated. No two programs are exactly alike, however, successful programs have many common elements. To review, these elements include: 1) a separation of seed certification activities from production and marketing programs, 2) financial independence to assure flexibility in achieving timely operations, 3) a well trained staff, 4) a service orientation, 5) a program used voluntarily, 6) achievable standards, 7) a good reputation is built, and 8) acceptable internationally. To achieve these elements requires high level and continuous support from the government as well as from seed growers, seed enterprises and marketing groups. Consistent policies are essential, effective leadership and sound management of the daily activities is also needed.

II Developing and Maintaining Support and Consistant Policies

The use of a National Seed Board, a special Seed Certification Sub-committee of the Board, or of a Seed Certification Board provides one way to bring together the various interests that need to support a seed certification program. Such a leadership group can also provide a way to establish policies and maintain continuity of the policies.

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The group should meet at least quarterly and more often if special problems arise

Major functions to be carried by such a group include

- 1 - Assure that the program is established on a sound financial basis. An initial grant from Government probably will be needed in order to initiate the program and provide for certain capital expenditures. Later it may become partially or totally self-sufficient.
- 2 - Approve seed certification standards for the country and concur in modifications as needed in the future.
- 3 - Approve procedures to be used by the inspectors in carrying out their duties.
- 4 - Approve a design for a seed certification label.
- 5 - Arrange for office space for the headquarters, preferably at the same location as the seed testing laboratory.
- 6 - Employ or approve the employment of the head of the Seed Certifying Authority and assure that an adequate staff is built.
- 7 - Arrange for the training of the staff of the seed certifying authority.
- 8 - Assure adequate mobility of the staff.
- 9 - Consider the problem cases as submitted to it by the head of the Seed Certifying Authority.

- 10 - Assure proper liaison with necessary governmental and university departments, seed growers, seed enterprises and marketing groups
- 11 - Assure that a good educational program is developed on the value of using good seed of recommended varieties

If a board is not used, an official in the government needs to assume the responsibility for these decisions

### III Management and Operation

The head of the seed certification activity needs to carry considerable responsibility and must have good managerial ability. Although individual situations will differ, in general he will need to

- 1 - Select staff members who are highly motivated, capable of working effectively with seed growers and seed enterprises, prepared to do the necessary travel to accomplish their task, and aware of the importance of thorough, objective work
- 2 - Assure that achievable seed certification standards are developed and published, procedures for field and seed inspections are clearly outlined for the staff, and that necessary forms are available for recording results ( See attached forms)
- 3 - Provide adequate training and educational material so the staff can identify all varieties being certified, at least the diseases included

in the standards, and those weeds of importance in seed

- 4 - Outline the procedure for seed growers and seed enterprises to apply for seed certification, provide them with needed forms, and supply them with guidelines and advice on steps to take to meet the standards
- 5 - Assign seed certification technologists to specific areas of inspection with adequate mobility, the time should be sufficiently ahead of the critical periods for inspection to assure that the work can be completed in a timely manner
- 6 - Develop a schedule of visits with seed certification technologists to spot problems, guide the inspection staff, and be aware of as many details of the work being done as possible
- 7 - Arrange with the inspection staff to be advised of fields liable for rejection so that these fields can be personally visited by the head, if necessary and possible
- 8 - Develop the procedure for officially rejecting fields, perhaps with the assistance of the "Seed Certification Committee" if serious problems develop
- 9 - Assure that the inspection staff is familiar with harvesting, drying, processing, and storage techniques so they can properly advise seed

enterprises ( If " approved seed processors " are to be recognized, specific instructions might be prepared for the staff in regard to inspecting their locations )

- 10 - Provide the staff with materials and instructions for seed sampling, assure timely seed testing and approval or rejection of seed lots
- 11 - Obtain seed certification labels, and perhaps seals, in adequate time for the staff to provide them for seed lots that have passed all standards ( See attached examples of labels )
- 12 - Develop a systematic method for maintaining records on all seed lots certified ( The records are used to continue the identity of a variety from one generation to another, to verify the varietal purity of the source of seed used, and to designate the generation, i e whether the seed in question is the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd generation from the Basic Seed )
- 13 - Assure that funds are available when needed
- 14 - Arrange to investigate complaints from users of certified seed and cooperate fully with the seed law enforcement unit on violations of the Seed Act
- 15 - Build close linkages with related activities such as crops research, basic seed multiplication, seed testing, seed law enforcement, extension, high level administrators, universities, seed growers, seed enterprises, and

seedsmen associations

- 16 - Maintain links with neighboring and international certification groups such as the OECD <sup>1/</sup> and AOSCA <sup>2/</sup> ( Maintaining procedures comparable to other programs can facilitate the import and export of certified seed )

When a new program is being started, it is better to concentrate on only one or two crops where truly superior varieties are available from the breeding programs. Starting with Basic Seed of a limited number of varieties provides time for the staff to become familiar with the varieties and procedures. It is far better to do thorough work on a limited scale initially than to attempt too much and risk serious mistakes that can undermine confidence in the program. The second cycle could include more Basic Seed plus Certified Seed production located with a few seed growers ( operating independently or under contract to seed enterprises ) During this cycle a special effort must go toward training the seed growers so they can meet the seed certification standards. When the staff has had experience in the production of Basic Seed, they can provide the needed guidance more confidently. After a year or two of experience with one or two crops, the staff can then start adding other crops, if improved varieties are available, and the interest of seed growers and seed enterprises can be maintained.

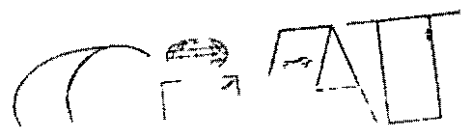
If an "official" seed testing laboratory is not functioning or available, it will be necessary for the Seed Certifying Authority to operate its own seed testing laboratory. Starting on a modest scale and growing will be easier for the laboratory staff to gain experience and do accurate work.

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1/ Organization for Economic Cooperation Development

2/ Association of Seed Certifying Agencies

If the leadership and the staff are providing the kind of service needed the seed growers, seed enterprises and marketing groups will become strong supporters of the service as well as of the crop research programs. Farmers also will start to recognize and appreciate the value of certified seed. When this starts to occur the seed certification activity has a solid base from which it can grow.



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