

LECTURE SIX

Seed treatment

Seed treatment is recommended to minimize insect infestation, to prevent seed borne diseases and to protect the germinating seed from disease infection in the soil. Seed treatment serves as a disinfectant when the pathogens in seed are destroyed or inactivated and as a protectant when fresh entry of the pathogen is prevented.

Treated seed becomes unfit for human and animal consumption. The sign treated with “poison” should appear on seed bags and label. Only that quantity of seed should be treated for which demand is certain.

If insect infestation in seed store is satisfactorily controlled by sanitation and fumigation then it would be advisable to treat seed just before distribution when relatively clear picture of seed demand is available.

Seed packaging

Packaging is necessary to

- Facilitate handling and storage
- Comply with any legal requirement
- Preserve viability and seed quality
- Make a presentable product for selling
- Maintain varietal and lot identity
- Provide seed in popular sizes to cover an area ranging from 1/4th to one hectare.

Types

1. Jute and paper bags Rice, maize, sorghum and cowpea seeds are commonly packaged in cotton jute and paper bags. Moisture vapour can penetrate these materials and hence they are not meant to protect against high RH: Such seed bags should be kept in dry storage condition.

2. Polyethylene bags : Alternatively, with inadequate storage facilities consideration could be given to packaging materials that can protect seed from moisture vapour. These include polyethylene bags of over 700 gauge thickness.

An essential precaution in using moisture proof containers, however, drying to a moisture level of 9% or less, otherwise seed can deteriorate rather fast. Owing to high cost and practical difficulties in meeting these conditions, jute bags appear to be the first choice at present. This, in conjunction with proper drying and good storage, is fairly adequate for six months storage over the dry season during which seed is usually held in Nigerian conditions.

Seed Marketing

Seed marketing is the process through which seed moves from the farm where it is produced to the consumer who plants it. Depending on the type of seed involved and proximity to site of use, the marketing process may be simply a farmer exchange or it may be a complicated transaction, involving several middlemen and a highly organized seed industry. Seed marketing cycle.

Consumer

Grower

Retailer

cleaner

Wholesaler

Buyer

Packager

Broker

Figure 3; A generalized seed marketing scheme

The sole purpose of producing seeds is to sell it. Good seed will often advertise and sell itself. To be cost effective, seed must be efficiently produced and efficiently marketed. Seed marketing is a complex task and calls for expert handling.

The reasons that make seed marketing different from marketing of other agricultural inputs are:

- a) Seed is used by farmers in villages and remote farms. Thus the problems of rural marketing e.g lack of transport facilities, poor communications, limited purchasing power of a small farmers, inadequate storage facilities, insufficient motivation for the use of good seeds are to be confronted.

- b) Seed is a living input very much prone to loss of viability. Therefore, require special treatment by marketing agency.

- c) Seed production is characterized by an inflexible time tag which is also dependent on uncontrollable environmental conditions. Seed marketing, therefore, requires effective demand estimation sufficiently in advance.
- d) Need for specific varieties for specific areas at specific time.
- e) Any unsold stock at the end of season poses problems of safe seed storage besides tying down capital.
- f) High sensitivity of seed to rh and temperature.
- g) The rate of obsolescence is high as old varieties continually give way to better ones.
- h) By virtue of cheapness, inferior seed is adopted to attract attention of a number of rural farmers.
- i) Generating seed quality consciousness is a gradual process.

Seed marketing organization and management.

A marketing organization should develop a network of sale points in all potential areas.

It should maintain a close contact with farmers and lay stress on technical guidance as part of sale service.

The organization should be in a position to monitor farmers' reaction to crop varieties, pay prompt attention to complaints on seed quality and gather feedback on effective demand for each variety. The information demand is extremely useful in planning out a realistic seed production programme.

Please note that for effective marketing management, the following activities are involved in market operations.

- Market intelligence
- Marketing research
- Demand assessment
- Inventory control
- Seed storage
- Pricing
- Dealer development
- Logistics and seed movement
- Supply and transport
- Sales and collection of sale proceeds
- Promotion and publicity.

The entire seed production effort is meant to satisfy the end user old seed. Therefore, effective marketing distribution, organization and management should engage fullest attention, if seed programme is to make an impact it is expected to make.