

CHAPTER 1

What is a Seed Enterprise?

A seed enterprise is a purely private undertaking for **producing** and **selling** quality seed to farmers. You can only undertake a seed enterprise if there is a prospect of demand for the seed that you wish to sell.



(i) Selecting the crop and varieties to produce

The enterprise should select those crops and varieties that the farmers desire and for which they are willing to buy quality seed and cultivate their farms. Not all crops will make a successful seed business. You should select the crop or combination of crops that will bring the highest economic benefit to the enterprise. Where possible and applicable, select the crops with highest economic value.



(ii) Producing seed in the field

The enterprise must have a means of producing the seed it wishes to sell. It can do so either on its own farm or by making contract agreements with other farmers to produce seed on their farms.



The seed the enterprise produces must meet acceptable quality standards in terms of physical and genetic purity, germination and health status. The enterprise should take good care and pay close attention at sowing time, during the growth stages in the field, at harvesting and

threshing, and during seed cleaning and storage. Seed production follows normal agronomic practices that are required for growing a good crop. However, in addition to these practices, there are some specialized activities needed for growing a crop specifically for the purpose of seed. These include sowing foundation seed, roguing the field to remove off-types, independent official inspection of the field, cleaning and packaging the seed, collecting samples and testing the seed for quality, and promoting the seed to other farmers.



(iii) Cleaning, treating and packaging the seed

Clean your seed to make it physically pure by removing all unwanted materials like seed of other crops, weed seeds, chaff, stones, broken and shriveled grains, etc. As desired, give the seed an appropriate chemical treatment to protect it from pests and diseases. Put the seed in a suitable and attractive packaging material that will preserve its quality status until sowing. Label your bag with relevant information to maintain the identity of that particular lot of seed and to promote its use to farmers.



(iv) Storing the seed

Seed has valuable life and it must be stored properly and preserved under good conditions until it finally reaches the farmer for sowing.



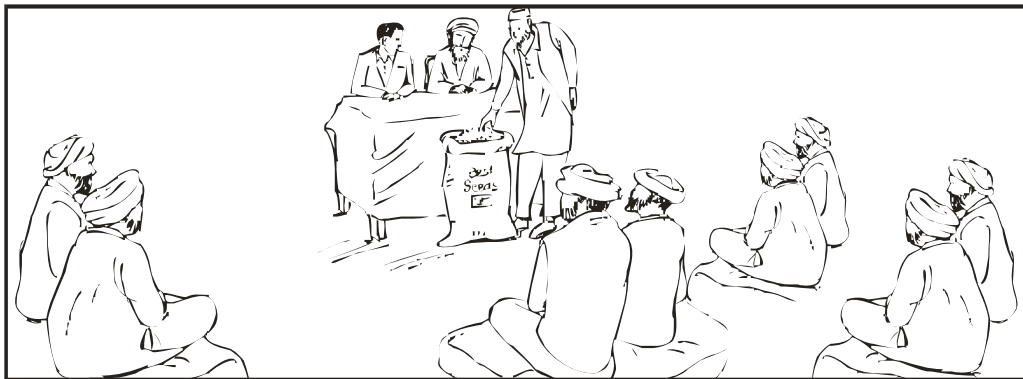
(v) Testing the seed for quality status

You must test the quality of your seed to ensure that the product you sell is clean, without disease, is true-to-type, and will germinate and grow well in the field.



(vi) Marketing your seed to farmers

To succeed in your business, you must sell all the seed you produce and avoid unnecessary carryover of unsold seed from one season to the next. You can only sell your seed if there is demand for it. You should demonstrate the quality attributes of your seed and convince agencies and other farmers to buy it.



Exercises and discussion points

What is a Seed Enterprise?

1. Outline the strengths and weaknesses of different possible seed production methods in your community. Which method do you prefer most and why?
2. Rank important field crops in your community in order of their economic value. What types of inputs and services would you need to produce good seed of the top two crops? Which of the crops that you have identified would you focus on in the beginning and which ones later? Discuss reasons for your answers.

Notes

Notes
