

State wide Campaign on Seed Treatment

Encouraged by the success of 100% seed treatment campaign in Kharif crops, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture has decided to continue the countrywide campaign for seed treatment in Rabi crops also, in order to make the crops free from disease and insect- pest infestation. Giving details of this campaign, Dr. J.C. Rana, Director of Agriculture, Himachal Pradesh said that this campaign would be run on the analogy of **National Immunization** and **Pulse Polio** campaigns. **Under this campaign, 30,000 quintals of seeds of Rabi crops, to be supplied by the Department out of farm produce as well as procured from the registered growers, would be distributed among farmers after seed treatment. For this, Rs. 13.50 lacs would be spent. 100% assistance on seed treatment chemicals shall be available to farmers to treat their own seed. Under this, 30,000 quintals of seed would be treated and Rs. 27 lacs would be spent.**

Dr. Rana told that seeds of all crops are generally infested with seed borne and soil borne diseases and insect pests, which not only affect the crops at emergence but also in other growth stages. The main aim of this campaign is to make crops disease and insect free through seed treatment. The concept of seed treatment implies such techniques by which seeds and vegetative propagation material is treated with biological and chemical agents for the control of seed borne and soil borne diseases and insect pests. Enumerating the benefits of seed treatment, he informed that it increases seed germination, ensures uniform seedling emergence and improved plant population; thus higher productivity. It protects seeds or seedlings from early season diseases and insect pests improving crop emergence and its growth. Seed treatments are relatively easy and cheaper as compared to pesticidal sprays.

Dr. Rana said that Department of Agriculture, Himachal Pradesh would run this campaign from 1-15 October, 2009. For this, the Department has constituted Seed Treatment Campaign Coordination Committees at State / District /

Block level. Farmers' training camps would be organised during this campaign, in which farmers would be made aware about seed treatment techniques / methods and its benefits. Treated seeds of cereals, peas, oilseeds, pulses and fodder crops would be distributed among farmers in the ensuing Rabi season. 50% cost of seed treatment [limited to Rs.45/- per quintal] would be borne by the Department. The remaining 50% cost shall be included in the sale rate of Rabi seeds. Farmers would also be encouraged to treat their own seeds. 100% assistance [limited to Rs.90/- per quintal] would be available to farmers for treating their own seeds. Fungicide Carbendazim 50 WP would be made available to the farmers for treating their own seeds. This assistance is available up to 2 acres of wheat per farmer and up to 1 acre in other crops.

He further informed that pesticide and seed dealers have been requested for giving wide publicity to this campaign. Besides this, Agriculture University and Krishi Vigyan Kendra's have also been requested to take appropriate steps for its effective implementation. Electronic and Print media with their massive penetration have vital role in Agriculture Extension and keeping in view this, wide publicity of seed treatment campaign would be given through these media. Technical literature on seed treatment would also be provided to the farmers.

He urged the farmers to participate in this campaign and sowing of seeds be done only after seed treatment. This will not only increase crop production but also improve the quality of produce.

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