



Producing Good Seed

Why use Good Seed?

Using "Good" seed often means lower seed rates plus more vigorous crop growth and higher yields. Vigorous crops can also reduce problems due to weeds, insects and diseases.

What is Good Seed?

Good seed is "true to type" (i.e., true to the variety), full in size, viable (with good germination and vigor), and free of materials such as weed seeds, diseases, insects or other matter.

Practices that help farmers produce Good Seed

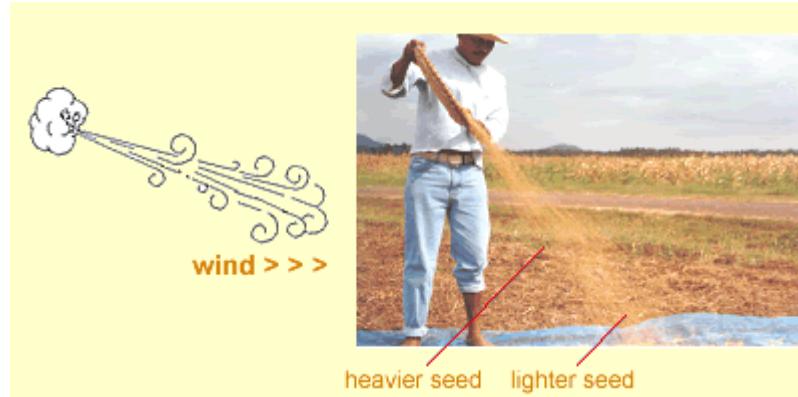
1. **Starting seed.** Buy certified seed from a reliable source or get good clean healthy seed from a neighbor or select your own good seed.
2. **Select.** Harvest seed from a uniform part of the field (i.e., where the crop is healthy, and similar in color, height and maturity).
3. **Winnow.** Harvested seed has seeds of different sizes and non-seed matter (e.g., weeds and straw). Winnow seed - by natural wind or an electric fan - to gather full (heavier) seed.
Procedure: Pour seed slowly from a height of 1-1.5 m. Repeat winnowing, if necessary. This procedure will also remove lighter weed seed and non-seed matter.
4. **Selection.** Select and keep the heavier seed that falls closer to the side from which the wind blows.
5. **Dry and Store.** If possible, dry seed (preferably to 12-14% moisture content for cereals) and store in a sealed airtight container or plastic bags specially developed for seed storage. Simple grain moisture meters are available. Rule of thumb: If the seed cracks cleanly when bitten then it is likely dry enough.
Note: Such seed can last for up to one year and still be good to plant.
6. **Test before planting.** Where possible, test seed germination before planting (e.g., Fact sheet on Ragdoll method).
Basic procedure: Select small random samples from the stored and germinate test 100-200 seed. You can pre-soak seed for 24 hours in water. Arrange soaked seeds in a grid pattern on a wet paper towel. Roll the paper towel up and place in a closed container or plastic bag. Ensure paper remains moist but not wet to the point of water running off – or seed will rot. Count the germinated seeds 3 and 5 days later and record the germination percentage. Counts are done on two days to learn about seed vigor.

Reference: <http://www.knowledgebank.irri.org/qualityseedcourse/index.php>

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Winnowing removes lighter seeds and debris. (Photo IRRI)