

Seeds

8.29 The use of quality seeds is vital for high per acre productivity in agriculture. The National Seeds Policy, 2001 provides a framework for ensuring the growth of the Seed Sector in a liberalized economic environment. It seeks to provide the Indian farmers with a wide range of superior seed varieties, and planting materials in adequate quantity. The production/distribution of certified/ quality seeds since 1997-98 is given in the Table 8.14.

8.30 A scheme for the establishment and maintenance of a Seed Bank has been in operation since 1999-2000. The basic objective of the scheme is to make available seeds for

meeting any contingent requirement and also develop infrastructure for production and distribution of seeds. The scheme is being implemented through National Seeds Corporation, State Farms Corporation of India and 12 State Seeds Corporations of various States. During the year 2001-02, the Seed Bank has a physical target of maintaining over 1,30,000 quintals of Certified Seeds and 10,000 quintals of Foundation Seeds of various major crop varieties. Besides, for the North Eastern States, a physical target of 14,075 quintals of Certified Seeds has been fixed. Some legislative measures taken recently in respect of seeds, plant varieties and farmers rights are prescribed in Box 8.1

Production/ Distribution of Certified/ Quality Seeds						
Type	Unit	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01*	2001-02**
Breeder Seed	Qtls.	46,134	38,994	51,236	42,560	45,000
Foundation Seed	'000 Qtls.	684	675	466	590	-
Certified Quality seed distribution	'000 Qtls	7,879	8,497	8,798	8,544	10,966
* Expected	** Target					

BOX 8.1

Draft Seeds Act, 2001

Based on the recommendations of Seed Policy Review Group, the draft Seeds Act, 2001, which would replace the existing Seeds Act, 1966 and Seed (Control) Order, 1983, is being finalized. The proposed legislation has the following features:

- Establishment of National Seeds Board (NSB).
- Compulsory registration by NSB of any seed for purpose of sowing or planting.
- Registration to be granted for new varieties on the basis of multi-locational trials over a minimum period of three seasons.
- The NSB will accredit ICAR Centres, State Agriculture Universities and private organizations to conduct Value for Cultivation and Use trials for purpose of registration for a fixed period.
- Registration of seed producers and seed processing plants.
- Import and export of seeds will be regulated under this Act.
- Import for sale of seeds will be permitted only for registered varieties. Any person who imports seeds or planting material will declare whether such material is a product of transgenic manipulation or involves Genetic Use Restriction Technology.
- Import of seeds in limited quantity of unregistered variety is to be permitted for research and trial.

Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Legislation

- The Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmers' Rights Legislation has been passed by Parliament and it will come into force from the date of notification by the Government of India.
- The objective of this legislation is to provide an effective system for the Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmers' Rights which will also stimulate investment for research and development both in public and private sector for development of new plant varieties by ensuring appropriate returns on such investment.
- The legislation recognizes the role of farmers as cultivators and conservers and the contribution of traditional, rural and tribal communities to the country's agro-bio diversity by rewarding them for their contribution through benefit sharing and protecting the traditional rights of the farmers.
- The Act has some unique features like benefit sharing, community rights and establishment of gene funds, which will *inter-alia*, support conservation and sustainable use of agro-bio diversity.
- The Act has provision to set up a Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmers' Rights Authority to perform all functions related to the protection of plant varieties.