

MESSAGE FROM DR. ESTHER KIMANI, MANAGING DIRECTOR, KEPHIS, TO KENYAN FARMERS DURING THE SHORT RAINS PLANTING SEASON

The short rains season that will run between October and December 2018 requires that farmers prepare their farming inputs well. KEPHIS is the government institution in Kenya, whose responsibility is to assure the quality of agricultural inputs and produce, certifying seeds of all crop varieties to ensure that only seed of highest quality is sold to farmers. The result is increased and enhanced harvests leading to food security and sufficiency in the country.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) ABOUT CERTIFIED SEED

1. What is certified seed and its benefits to Kenyan farmers?

Certified seed is seed that has met the minimum national set quality standards after undergoing field inspection(s), laboratory tests and post control tests by KEPHIS as per The Seeds and Plant Varieties Act (Cap 326) of the laws of Kenya. The use of certified seed guarantees the following:

- Certified seed does not cost, it pays; it results in high yields, quality crop produce and better returns when all other factors of crop production and agricultural practices are optimal (i.e. good soil fertility, conducive climatic conditions, adequate soil and irrigation and proper water/fertilizer usage). Farmers are advised to confirm the quality of agricultural inputs (fertilizer, manures, pesticides, water and soil) used through laboratory tests conducted by reputable laboratories such as the KEPHIS Analytical Testing Laboratory (ACL) which has offices at KEPHIS headquarters, Nairobi and Kitale regional office.
- In certified seed, a farmer is getting guaranteed quality assurance; offers better deals in crop insurance/financing of the crop; traceability of certified seed is easy; in certified seed a farmer is getting access to premium market(s);
- Less insect and disease problems; quality seed responds better to applied fertilizers; uniformity in plant population and maturity; good seed prolongs life of a variety; yield prediction is easy; handling in post-harvest operation is easy; high produce value and their marketability

2. How can a farmer identify certified seeds?

Certified seeds are packed in containers or packets which are clearly labeled and contain the following information:

- a. Seed lot numbers to allow for easy traceability of seed lot in the event of crop failure
- b) Weight of the seeds
- b) Name of the crop species and variety
- c) Packaging date
- d) Seed merchant/company
- e) Labeling and sealing of the containers or packets is done in such a way that seeds cannot be removed without damaging the seal or label.

New feature: A sticker label in all seed packaging of 5kg and below. The farmer will scratch and send the serial number to 1393 through an SMS, then receive feedback on the validity of the seedlot.

3. Farmers can avoid fake seeds by:

- Purchasing seed(s) from seed stockists who are licensed by KEPHIS and prominently display their seed seller's license. Purchase seeds early enough and avoid last minute rush.
- Buying seeds packed in official company packets containing Variety Name and Lot Number; **DO NOT PURCHASE SEEDS FROM OPEN CONTAINERS.**
- After planting, keep the packet and receipt as these may be required as evidence in case you suspect fake seed.
- Not exposing seed(s) to extreme weather conditions, e.g. heat, moisture, direct contact with fertilizer otherwise the quality of the seed will be compromised.

NOTE: Report all cases of suspect seed(s) at the nearest police station, nearest KEPHIS offices or the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation

4. Plant recommended seed varieties for your area

Farmers are advised to purchase and plant recommended seed varieties for their particular areas.

For more information, please contact:

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KEPHIS countrywide offices

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