



National Seed Certification – why it is important in South Africa

In accordance with the Plant Improvement Act (no. 53 of 1976), Article 3 (1), SANSOR (South African National Seed Organisation) was appointed as Authority to exercise certain powers under Article 24(a)(1), to execute activities and responsibilities assigned and granted in accordance with the South African Seed Certification Scheme.

Article 24(2)(a), furthermore, stipulates that the Designated Authority can authorize a person to execute or conduct activities or responsibilities in terms of that authority

Since 1989 SANSOR has been the designated authority to manage and execute all functions pertaining to seed certification on behalf of the government. This includes not only the National Seed Certification Scheme, but all international seed schemes such as AOSCA, OECD and SADC. This is achieved by means of a core administrative staff and the use of more than 160 private seed inspectors who are trained, examined and authorized to conduct specific functions. Total seed certification has almost doubled over the past five years. Presently, SANSOR is responsible for certification of seed crops produced on more than 60 000 hectares.

Seed Certification is voluntary in South Africa, except for specific varieties listed on Table 8 of the Plant Improvement Act on request of the breeder/owner thereof.

What is certified seed?

Certified seed is seed of a consistently high and known quality (genetically and physically) produced according to the rules and regulations of an official Seed Certification Scheme and for which proof of certification is available.

Generally, Certified seed must meet more and stricter requirements than other seed and there exists a more intensive control system with over 90 check points. The Certification Certificates, seals and labels issued by SANSOR, are a guarantee of varietal purity and seed quality.

The aim of seed certification is to conduct genetic maintenance of existing varieties, as well as new varieties as developed and described by the breeder.

The Scheme exercises control from breeder seed, through Pre-Basic to Basic and finally to Certified seed and aims specifically to guarantee varietal purity, as well as seed with good physical qualities.

SANSOR will only certify seed lots produced on fields registered with SANSOR. During the registration process the origin of the seed is verified. Field inspections, during which several aspects such as varietal purity and isolation are controlled, are conducted by trained and authorized seed inspectors. After harvest, processing and packaging the seed is sampled and tested by registered seed testing laboratories for germination and physical purity, as well as for varietal purity and identity through post control grow-outs done by government.

SENSAKO seed quality standards exceed these International standards.

For more information, contact Sensako or your closest SANSOR representative.