**Procedure for Registration and Licensing of Seed Transporters and Sellers**

**By**

**Department of Agriculture Research Service**

**Chitedze Research Station**

**Seed Services Unit**

**P. O Box 158**

**Lilongwe**

**Background**

The Republic of Malawi has an emerging formal seed system that strives for excellence to ensure availability of high quality seed to the farming community. The seed system comprises of research and variety development, crop variety release and registration, seed multiplication, seed certification, and seed distribution and marketing. The seed system is governed and regulated by the 2022 Seed Act and the Seed Regulations, 2018 which to undergo review very soon

Once a crop variety is developed, if it satisfies all the requirements, it is released or approved through the Agriculture Technology Clearing Committee (ATCC) which is to be replaced by variety release committee in accordance with seed Act 2022. The variety is then registered in the Catalogue of Agricultural Technologies, which qualifies it for multiplication into certified seed for sell to farmers.

The Seed Law empowers the Seed Services Unit (SSU) in the Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS) of the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that high quality seed of improved crop varieties are produced and made available to farmers. Ensuring production and availability of high quality seeds is accomplished through a series of processes including a comprehensive seed grower registration and seed source verification, seed crop field inspections, seed sampling, seed labelling, laboratory seed testing and licensing of seed sellers (agro dealers).

For farmers to access certified seed of an approved crop variety, seed sellers remain an integral player in the seed value chain. Seed sellers, commonly known as agro dealers, are the main conduit for ensuring that seed is available to the farming community. The majority of seed sellers in Malawi are not seed producers but sell seed on either contract with a seed company or purchase seed and re-sell to farmers in their zones of influence, thereby bringing certified seed close to farmers and reducing farmer seed search cost. In other cases, seed companies use hub agro dealers who operate as whole sellers, stocking large volumes of seed and re-distributing it to retail seed sellers.

There are about 430 seed sellers operating in Malawi as per statistics of 2021.22 season. According to the Seed Trade Association of Malawi (STAM), these were not categorized as hub-or retail agro-dealers. Further, it has been established that some retail seed sellers used by hub agro dealers are not licensed by SSU, which has led to mishandling of certified seed thereby compromising seed quality and farmers’ yields. No transporter has ever been trained in seed handling, yet they also compromise seed quality especially legume seeds through poor seed handling in transit to selling points. Poor seed handling in transit to the selling point, at the selling point and poor seed storage facilities compromise seed quality during distribution and sell leading to poor germination and compromised yields.

In order to curb this challenge, seed sellers including hub agrodealers and transporters need to be registered, monitored and qualified ones, trained and licensed to ensure maintenance of seed quality throughout the selling season as per Seed Regulations 2018. However, no proper procedure for registering, monitoring, and training seed sellers and transporters has been documented and implemented. With support from AGRA-USAID, SSU has documented a proper procedure, which will be implemented starting 2021.

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Certified seed produced needs to be accessed by farmers in various parts of the country. To distribute seed, seed companies engage transporters and seed sellers who sell the seed to farmers. The Seed Regulations, 2018 require all transporters and seed sellers to be licensed by SSU to ensure that seed quality is maintained in transit, storage and at point of sell.

**1.0 Purpose**

1.1 This procedure defines the sequence of events and responsibilities involved in the licensing of certified seed transporters and sellers.

**2.0 Scope**

2.1 From planning to transport or sell certified seed to delivery of the seed to and from the market or returning left over seed to the seed company for re-sampling and re-testing

**3.0 References**

3.1 Seed regulations, 2018

3.2 ISTA Rules for seed testing

3.3 Seed monitoring procedure

**4.0 Definitions**

4.1 SSU: Seed Services Unit

4.2 CTL: Commodity Team Leader

4.3 Seed company: An entity producing certified seed for purposes of distribution and sell to farmers

4.4 Seed seller: A person with recommended facilities licensed to sell seed either on contract with a seed company or who buys from seed companies on cash and re-sell to farmers

4.5 Hub agro dealers: A person approved to sell inputs including seed at a whole sale. Can sell to retail agro-dealers for purposes of re-sell

4.6 MD: Managing Director

4.7 MM: Marketing Manager

**5.0 Responsibilities and Authority**

5.1 SSU is responsible for registration, training and monitoring transporters in accordance with Seed Regulations 2018

5.2 MD is responsible for signing seed transporters’ and sellers’ contracts

5.3 MM is responsible for ensuring that seed is marketed in accordance with the law.

**6.0 Activities**

6.1 Planning to be a seed transporter and seller

6.1.1 Interested seed transporter shall ensure that reliable transport and water proof cover (in case of open trucks) are available to avoid soaking the seed in case of rain

6.1.2 Interested seed sellers or hub agro-dealers will ensure that adequate and recommended facilities are available to avoid compromising seed quality

6.1.3 Both transporters and seed sellers shall contact seed companies for possible contracts to transport and sell seed respectively

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**6.2 Registration as a seed seller**

6.2.1 Before contract signing, transporters and seed sellers must register with the nearest SSU offices located at Lunyangwa Research Station in Mzuzu, Lifuwu Research Station in Salima, Chitedze Research Station in Lilongwe and Bvumbwe Research Station in Thyolo.

6.2.2 Seed transporters and sellers should furnish SSU with information on exact location of their selling points and district, condition and capacity of their shops, seed company expected to transport or sell seed for and any other relevant information as may be required by filling form SR9

6.2.3 Seed transporters and sellers will pay registration fee to SSU as stipulated in the law

**6.3 Monitoring of seed selling shops**

6.3.1 SSU will inspect seed selling shops, which need to meet the following;

* Nature of floor - concrete floor required
* Shop ventilation, coolness and dryness – shops must be well ventilated, cool and dry
* Hygiene level – high levels of hygiene, freedom from pests e.g. rodent, insect pests, and leakage
* Presence of seed pallets - seed packets must be placed on pallets
* Adequacy of space in relation to the amount of seed to store per given time - seed should not be mixed with fertilizers, chemicals and other non-seed materials

6.3.2 SSU will check availability of water proof cover (preferably tarpaulin) of the transporter

**6.4 Seed transporter and sellers contract**

6.4.1 SSU will recommend qualified seed transporter and sellers including quantity of seed each can handle to seed companies for awarding contracts to sell seed.

6.4.2 Duly signed contracts should indicate quantity of seed each seed seller can handle at a particular time

**6.5 Training and licensing of seed transporters and sellers**

6.5.1 SSU will train registered seed transporters and sellers who meet requirements to transport and sell seed in Malawi on seed certification, quality control, management and handling

6.5.2 Trained seed transporters and sellers will be issued a license, which is valid for one year. The license will renewable annually upon meeting all requirements as per the law

6.5.3 No training will be required for renewal as long as the transporter or sellers comply with requirements

6.5.4 SSU will withdraw the license if conditions for selling seed are contravened

**6.6 Displaying of License**

6.6.1 Seed sellers will display a valid license at a conspicuous place all the time

6.6.2 Seed transporters will ensure that they have a valid license when transporting seed

6.6.3 Transporting and selling seed without a license is an offense punishable by law

**6.7 Seed transporters and sellers code of conduct**

6.7.1 A seed seller will ensure that seed being sold meets minimum prescribed standards, and is intended for that particular agro-ecology for optimal performance. NO SEED SELLER

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SHOULD SELL FAKE SEED but be a watchdog of fake seed traders and report them to nearest agriculture office

6.7.2 A seed seller should provide advice to farmers on the best varieties for their area as well as good agronomic practices where possible

6.7.3 A seed seller must ensure that every seed packet and mother bag are well sealed and have labels, which could be ‘stick on’ or ‘stitch on’ the packet. Seed packets written by permanent markers should not be accepted

6.7.4 The following information should be on a seed packet label; crop name, variety name, seed class, lot number, seed testing certificate number, year of production, date of test, net weight, and seed treatment declaration

6.7.5 No seed packet should be opened and divided into smaller size at the selling point. All seed packets must be well sealed. Inform the seed company if smaller seed packet sizes are demanded in your zones of influence

6.7.6 A seed seller must not ask the farmer to empty the seed into another bag for re-use of the seed packet

6.7.7 A seed seller must sell seed only at a designated location and not share seed with non-licensed individuals or move seed to open markets. Any seed sharing must be approved by SSU

6.7.8 A licensed seed transporter and seller will not expose seed to conditions that deteriorates it e.g. water, direct sunlight etc

6.7.9 A seed transporter must not mix seed with fertilizer and other non-seed material that might compromise seed quality

6.7.10 No seed seller should sell EXPIRED SEED

6.7.11 Seed companies should ensure that their contracted seed sellers are complying with the law.

**6.8 Inspection (monitoring) of seed transporters and sellers, seed re-sampling and re-testing**

6.8.1 SSU inspector/sampler will inspect the premises at any time and re-sample the seed if deemed so for re-testing at the seed testing laboratory. The seed seller should not continue selling such seed unless advised otherwise by the inspector.

6.8.2 An inspector will impound any seed lot if it does not meet requirements

6.8.3 A seed seller should provide any seed related information to the seed inspector if requested to do so

**6.9 Database of licensed seed transporters and sellers**

6.9.1 All licensed seed transporters and sellers will be documented into a database, which will be available on Ministry of Agriculture and STAM websites.

6.9.2 Seed sellers selling seed for hub agro dealers will be listed under each hub agro dealer

6.9.3 Database will be updated annually upon license renewal

**7.0 Records**

7.1 List of seed transporters and sellers

7.2 Application forms

7.3 Monitoring report of the facilities/premises

7.4 Copies of seed transporters and sellers’ certificates

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**8.0 Annexes**

8.1 Annex I: Form SR9 - Application form for a seed sellers license

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Annex I. FORM SR9



**REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

**SEED CERTIFICATION &QUALITY CONTROL SERVICES**

**APPLICATION FOR A SEED SELLER’S LICENSE**

To: Controller of Seeds, Chitedze Research Station, P.O. Box 158, Lilongwe

Name of Applicant………………………………………………………………………………….

Address …………………………………………………………………………………………….………………………………………………………………………………………………………

I hereby apply for seed seller’s license.

Name and address of premises ……………………………………………………………………..

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Email Address: ……………………………………………………………………………………..

Physical Address ……………………….………………..…………………….. …………...…….

Species to be sold ……….…………………………………………………………………………

Storage facilities ……………………………………………………………………………………

Date …………………………………….…… Signature …………………………………………

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

Application received on ……………………………………………………………………………

Premises inspected by …………………………………………………………………………… Decision Approved/Rejected ……………………………………………………………………..

License No. …………………………………………. Date ………………………………….. …

Signature ……………………………… …………………………………………………………

Director of DARS