

## SUPERVISION OF RETAIL TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL SEEDS IN THE NETHERLANDS <sup>1)</sup>

(Summary of the Regulations)

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### 1 TYPES OF SEED ALLOWED TO BE SOLD

According to the provisions of the PLANT BREEDERS' DECREE, 1941, the only agricultural seeds allowed to be on the market are those of varieties which have been entered on the latest List of Varieties of Field Crops and which have been certified and sealed in accordance with standard requirements by the Netherlands General Inspection Service for Seeds of Field Crops and Seed Potatoes (N.A.K.) <sup>2)</sup>.

In order to ascertain whether the seeds meet the requirements, the seed crop has to be inspected in the field, and the seed must be examined in the form of a representative sample and in bulk.

The following stages can be distinguished :

- 1 Application for field inspection, in which the origin of the seed is verified.
- 2 Field inspection of the seed crop. Attention is given to trueness to type, varietal purity, health and cross-fertilization.
- 3 Supervision of processing in such a way that the identity of the lots is guaranteed from harvest until the ultimate sealing of the lot.
- 4 Inspection of the seed lot. External qualities such as colour, smell, touch and cleanliness are examined, and the degree of homogeneity is observed.
- 5 Sample investigation. Purity, germinating capacity, moisture content, grading, weed content and admixture are estimated, and the seed is evaluated once more on the basis of external qualities.
- 6 Sealing and certifying.
- 7 Subsequent check on the field inspection by sowing samples from the ultimately sealed lots on the control fields of the N.A.K.

The following exceptions to the provisions of the Plant Breeders' Decree should be noted :

- 1 Sale within this country of the so-called 'U'varieties, mentioned in the Supplement to the List of Varieties of Field Crops, is not allowed. They are destined only for export.
- 2 Sale is allowed of non-certified seeds of some less important crops of which there are only a few varieties or none at all, provided these seeds meet

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<sup>2)</sup> Abbreviation for Dutch name of Netherlands General Inspection Service, etc.

the requirements as to "pure live seed" <sup>3)</sup>). The main crops in this category are : serradella, spurrey and vetches.

- 3 Sale is also allowed of grass and clover seed of varieties that have not been listed, as otherwise there would not normally be sufficient seed available. These seed lots may consist of imported seed or of seed of unknown provenance grown in the Netherlands, such seed, if it satisfies the standards for bulk and sample inspections, being sealed as "commercial seed" (Dutch "Handelszaad"). With effect from 1954-5, however, clover seed of unknown provenance will not be accepted for field inspection.
- 4 The breeder is allowed to deliver for practical testing limited quantities of seeds of new varieties, irrespective of whether or not they are on trial for entry on the List of Varieties, provided this seed is not destined for normal trade.
- 5 If sufficient seed approved by field inspection is not available in respect of certain crops, seed lots from crops not inspected in the field can be released as "sowing" seed. If this seed satisfies the standards for sample and bulk inspection, it will be sealed as "commercial seed", in the same way as clover seed of unknown provenance.

## 2 DELIVERY OF SEED GROWN IN THE NETHERLANDS

### (1) *Sampling*

With the exception of serradella, spurrey and vetches, all seeds have to be sampled and sealed by an inspection officer of one of the provincial branches of the N.A.K.

### (2) *Delivery by farmer to breeder/wholesaler*

- a Provisionally sealed by one of the provincial branches of the N.A.K., or
- b Cleaned, and sealed by one of the provincial branches of the N.A.K.

### (3) *Delivery by dealer to retail trade or consumer*

- a Large units in standard packing with "N.A.K." seal and certificate.
- b Quantities of 5 kg or more (large seeds), 1 kg or more (small seeds), but less than the units mentioned under a :

#### (i) Without seal :

In securely closed packing units on or in which are the names of the dealer, species, variety and designation.

#### (ii) With "N.A.K. retail seal" :

Delivery under N.A.K. retail seal is only allowed in the case of small quantities belonging to packing units sealed and certified by the N.A.K. (This retail packing has to be accompanied by a retail certificate submitted by one of the provincial branches of the N.A.K., provided with the official signature or stamp of the affiliate (seedsmen are affiliates of the N.A.K.), and with further data in accordance with the original

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<sup>3)</sup> i.e.  $\frac{\% \text{ purity} \times \% \text{ germination}}{100} - 3 \times \% \text{ of weeds.}$

certificate. The dealer himself is allowed to seal the packing with retail seals and numbering pliers put at his disposal by the N.A.K.).

- c Deliveries of less than 5 kg (large seeds), less than 1 kg (small seeds) (small units):
  - (i) Without seal and without further details about the seeds concerned.
  - (ii) Provided with retail seal, if desired.

### 3 DELIVERY OF IMPORTED SEEDS

All imported seed lots placed on the home market have to be sampled for testing by the State Seed Testing Station. Delivery of such lots is only allowed after receipt of the test results obtained by this Station, unless the provincial branch of the N.A.K. permits earlier delivery.

#### (1) *Sampling*

- a By a sworn sample drawer; sealing by the dealer himself with his own seal and label or tag.
- b If sealing with warranty labels is desired, the sampling has to be carried out by an officer of the provincial branch of the N.A.K., and the lot is provided with warranty labels and sealed with the R.P.v.Z. seal (R.P.v.Z. = Abbreviation for Dutch name of the State Seed Testing Station). Warranty labels are labels with a blank space on them, on which a printed paper slip issued by the R.P.v.Z. can be fixed. The analysis results are shown on these slips. If the dealer does not affix the slips to the labels, or if they were not sent to the user because the seed was delivered before the dealer received the slips, the user can claim the analysis results from the provincial branches which sealed the lot, or from the State Seed Testing Station, which carried out the test. About 90% of the imported seeds are delivered with warranty labels.

#### (2) *Delivery by dealer to retail trade or consumer*

- a Large units (standard packing):
  - (i) Under R.P.v.Z. seal and warranty label.
  - (ii) Under seal and label of the importer. The label has to bear the correct name of the crop, and, if desired, the correct name of the variety, provenance, warranted figures for pure live seed or a declaration that it "satisfies Dutch requirements", date of sampling, name and address or N.A.K. affiliate number of the importer.
- b 5 kg or more (large seeds), 1 kg or more (small seeds):
  - (i) Without seal:

In securely closed packing units, on or in which are the names of the dealer and species, the words "imported seed", and, if necessary, the name of the variety and country of origin.
  - (ii) Delivery under N.A.K. retail seal:

This is only allowed when the lot has been received with R.P.v.Z. seal and warranty label.

(Procedure for using the N.A.K. retail seal is the same as in the case of seed grown in the Netherlands).

- c Delivery of small units (less than 5 kg of large seeds, less than 1 kg of small seeds):
  - (i) Without seal and without further details about the seeds concerned.
  - (ii) If desired, provided with retail seal and declaration giving further details about the seed concerned, but only when the lot has been received with R.P.v.Z. seal and warranty label.

#### 4 DELIVERY OF MIXTURES

(1) *Under N.A.K. seal (mixtures mentioned in the List of varieties only):*

- a Mixing carried out under supervision of the N.A.K.
- b Sealing by the N.A.K. with N.A.K. seal, and provision of declaration on which details of the composition have to be given.
- c Small quantities are provided with N.A.K.-retail seal and retail declaration by the dealer himself.

(2) *Under the dealer's own seal and/or label:*

Provided with a declaration indicating the composition and details of every kind present in the mixture concerned, just as if they were being delivered separately. (For the details of the mixture it is sufficient to refer to the specification of the relative mixture in the List of Varieties, or to the number in the price list, if the composition has actually been described in this price list).

#### 5 BOOK-KEEPING IN THE RETAIL TRADE

Receipt of every lot (Dutch as well as imported) must be accounted for in the books. The following details have to be given:

name of the supplier, data concerning the seed lot (species, variety, provenance, quantity, warranty), mark or number allotted by the provincial branch of the N.A.K., and dates of receipt and last delivery.

#### 6 KEEPING STOCKS OF SEED IN THE RETAIL TRADE

The lots circulating in the retail trade during the delivery season must satisfy at least the minimum standards. Labels and descriptive leaflets attached to or enclosed in the original packing units have to accompany the seed.

The validity of the N.A.K. seal expires on the 1st of June following the date of sealing.

The State Seed Testing Station and the provincial branches of the N.A.K. are prepared to retest the seed lots at a reduced fee during the summer months. Lots requiring retesting after November have to be stored as inferior seeds, if it is not certain that they will still satisfy the minimum standards, until a new test has proved that they come up to these standards.

Seeds that do not satisfy the minimum standards may be stored separately at the retailer's establishment as inferior seeds, provided that:

- a Each lot is recorded in a special book, in which the exact quantity, correct name of species, number of lot and date of entry as inferior seeds are inserted.

- b Each lot is sealed and provided with a special label by the N.A.K., indicating the inferiority of the lot.

Inferior seeds may only be delivered for consumption purposes to dealers in inferior seeds under the supervision of the N.A.K. If inferior seeds have been delivered, the retail trade must always be able to prove to the satisfaction of an officer of the N.A.K. or of the Government Control Service that this delivery took place lawfully.

A dealer who wants to destroy inferior seeds has to carry out such destruction under the supervision of the N.A.K. or of one of the officers detached to the R.P.v.Z. in order to be able to prove at a later date that a particular lot was actually destroyed.

Mixing of inferior seeds with first-quality seeds of the same origin, in order to sell the mixture, is allowed, provided a record is kept as to what lots are mixed; the new mixture meeting the requirements, of course.

Enforcement of these rules is partly carried out by the provincial branches of the N.A.K., particularly as regards that part of the retail trade authorized to use its own seal and pliers. The Seed Testing Station, however, is the institution charged with enforcing the regulations of the Act to prevent fraud in the trade in fertilizers, seeds and feeding stuffs, in so far as seeds are concerned, while the inspectors working for the Station are at the same time entitled to make reports on which the N.A.K. may prosecute.

These officers regularly visit the various seed dealers at the premises where they sell their seeds, viz. shops, warehouses and markets. They ascertain on the spot whether the formalities stipulated by law concerning warranty and N.A.K. regulations are being complied with; they warn, advise, and draw samples from lots offered for sale, as they consider desirable. If it appears that the regulations are not being sufficiently observed, or that the seeds do not meet requirements, the seed dealer concerned first receives a note of warning, and in the event of a second offence he is summoned.

The importance of the system of control and of the arrangements for supervision is that it forces many seed dealers who are not very particular, owing either to lack of care or to competition in prices, to pay more attention to their seeds.

