

# Seed Alert

#01 May 2020

Seed Alerts identify current challenges and urgent action in the Nigerian seed sector, based on surveys and focus group discussions with various stakeholders

# Nigeria

Photo: NASC

## Alert 1

Mobility restrictions hamper the access to markets by farmers, seed companies and agro-dealers

## Alert 2

Measures result in increased seed prices and reduce affordability for farmers

## Alert 3

Mobility restrictions hamper seed quality assurance services

## Alert 4

Mobility restrictions hamper the production and supply of early generation seed

## Alert 1

Mobility restrictions hamper the access to markets by farmers, seed companies and agro-dealers

### What is the impact?

- COVID-19 measures reduce mobility of farmers; they cannot travel to points of sale, agro-dealers, and formal and informal markets, where they purchase quality seed and other agricultural inputs
- Agro-dealers, traders and other seed entrepreneurs have difficulties to reach or even operate within markets or locations where they do their business; this challenges their ability to sell quality seed and agro-inputs
- The months of May and June are critical for the planting of crops that are crucial for the agricultural economy and food security, including cereals, legumes, root and tuber crops

### What actions are required?

- Structure the trade of seed and agro-inputs in designated markets and on specific days
- Comply in organizing these markets with social distancing directions of government and relevant agencies
- Allow only entrance to these markets to authorized persons, e.g. certified agro-dealers, seed companies, seed inspectors and farmers
- Use a decentralized model for organizing the markets that allows quality seed and agro-inputs to be transported close to farmers, and thus reduce the distance that farmers need to travel to access inputs

### What stakeholders are involved?

- Ministries of Agriculture at federal and state levels, National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC), Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN), North Central Agri-Input Dealers Association (NOCAIDA), Fertilizer Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria (FEPSAN), Security Agencies (Police and other paramilitary forces), NCDC (National Centre for Disease Control), and other federal and state health authorities

### Who takes initiative? Who drives action?

- NASC, SEEDAN, NOCAIDA, FEPSAN, and other agro-input dealer associations to immediately form a coalition and appoint state level agro-input taskforces with a clear mandate to seek approval for the establishment of specialised agro-input markets
- State agro-input taskforces work with the relevant state authorities to establish and organize the agro-input markets in the coming weeks

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**What actions are required?**

- Review regularly the interstate movement of essential agricultural goods and services (by agencies at federal and state level) and provide guidance on measures to be taken to responsible authorities
- Ensure that the services and business of seed companies and agro-input dealers are designated as essential
- Communicate their role as essential to food security and the national economy widely through all traditional and social media platforms
- Target with specific and tailored communication security and other law enforcement agencies to enable the effective inter- and intrastate movement of seed and other agro-inputs

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**What stakeholders are involved?**

- NASC to collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture at federal and state levels, security agencies and health authorities

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**Who takes initiative? Who drives action?**

- NASC, federal and state Ministries of Agriculture to engage immediately with specific COVID-19 taskforces and security teams responsible to monitor and control inter- and intrastate movement
  - NASC and state Ministries of Agriculture engage in communication strategies
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*Early Generation Seeds being loaded for distribution from a Research Station in Ibadan Nigeria. (Photo IAR&T)*



*Certified seed shop locked in Abuja, Nigeria. (Photo NASC)*



# Alert 2

Measures result in increased seed prices and reduce affordability for farmers

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## What is the impact?

- The COVID-19 crisis impacts farmers' cash earnings from farming and their other income generating activities
- The crisis and associated measures hinder farmers' access to financial services for investing in the purchase of agro-inputs such as seed
- Measures have implications on the costs of production, processing, transporting and marketing seed, e.g. the costs for transport has tripled
- Considering uncertainty, farmers either advance purchase, delay or show a reduced willingness to pay for quality seed of improved varieties
- This has major implications on the business model of seed companies, producers, and other seed entrepreneurs

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## What actions are required?

- Encourage governments to provide seed subsidies to farmers as a palliative measure
- Ensure subsidies only to be applicable for seed purchased from NASC approved seed companies and producers
- Share in a structured manner and at state level information on the availability of seed with companies and producers
- Engage in an organized manner in the marketing and distribution of the subsidized seed directly to farmers
- Within the marketing and distribution schemes, promote the use of Seedcodex, ensure seed quality and package identity to allow companies to remain accountable for seed quality, and reduce opportunities for substandard or fake seed

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## What stakeholders are involved?

- Federal and state governments, Ministries of Agriculture, NASC, SEEDAN, seed companies, seed producers, farmer organizations and civil society

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## Who takes initiative? Who drives action?

- NASC to immediately engage with federal and state governments to provide seed subsidies as palliative measure for farmers given the importance for post-COVID-19 food security
- NASC engages with state governments already providing seed subsidies to farmers on the need for direct purchase of seed from approved seed producers
- NASC, SEEDAN, and other agro-input dealer associations provide support through state level agro-input taskforces in setting up such schemes, with NASC supporting the linkage between involved government agencies with NASC authorized and pre-approved seed companies, provide information on seed accessible in states and promote the use of Seedcodex

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*Seed Distribution Gang of Value Seed Nigeria Limited (Photo Value Seeds Ltd)*



# Alert 3

## Mobility restrictions hamper seed quality assurance services for seed quality assurance

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### What is the impact?

- The COVID-19 measures negatively impact the functioning of field inspection and laboratory testing required for seed certification
- NASC inspection officers are hampered inspecting seed production fields
- The transactions and linkages required for sending samples for laboratory testing are constrained
- The linkages and transactions required in picking of certification tags and its administration on seed packages are constrained
- Hampered quality assurance services create a risk to the business model of seed companies and producers in the production of certified seed of improved varieties
- A subsequent result is that because of scarcity, seed prices will increase, and some entrepreneurs will put on the market carry-over or substandard seed

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### What actions are required?

- Raise awareness and engage with responsible authorities to consider seed an essential commodity, which allows for specific exemptions on COVID-19 measures to be developed for the seed industry and associated services
- Encourage NASC regional offices to approach their respective state Commissioners of Agriculture and COVID-19 Taskforce including relevant Senior Police Authorities to countersign and stamp letters issued for seed movement, building on the effective measure taken in Oyo state
- Provide certification officers and seed companies with movement tags or permits
- Engage in a communication strategy to inform security forces on the seed industry designation as an essential service

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### What stakeholders are involved?

- NASC in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture at federal and state levels in close collaboration with security agencies and health authorities

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### Who takes initiative? Who drives action?

- NASC, federal and state Ministries of Agriculture to engage immediately with the COVID-19 Taskforces and agencies responsible for inter- and intrastate level transport permits
- NASC and state Ministries of Agriculture engage in the communication strategies

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### What actions are required?

- Decentralize responsibilities from NASC headquarters to regional offices in seed quality assurance
- Encourage and support third-party certification for field inspection where intra- and interstate restrictions prevent seed certification officer's access to seed field

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### What stakeholders are involved?

- NASC headquarters and regional offices, State Ministry of Agriculture, research institutes, third party public and private inspection providers

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### Who takes initiative? Who drives action?

- NASC headquarters and regional offices, State Ministries of Agriculture, seed programmes and seed companies to immediately promote and engage in decentralized seed quality assurance and getting permits
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# Alert 4

## Mobility restrictions hamper the production and supply of early generation seed

### What is the impact?

- Early generation seed (EGS) production and supply by National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) to seed producers and companies are negatively impacted by COVID-19 mobility measures
- Hampered EGS supply creates a risk to the business model of seed companies and producers in the production of certified seed of new, improved varieties
- Seed producers and companies will be hampered in the next season's production of the right quantity of certified seed of their portfolio of hybrid and open-pollinated maize varieties, as well as for the production of certified seed of improved varieties for crops such as rice and legumes
- This will impact negatively the quantity of seed and diversity of varieties that seed companies make available to farmers in the market
- With a foreseen subsequent scarcity, seed prices will increase, and some entrepreneurs will put on the market carry-over or substandard seed

### What actions are required?

- Raise awareness and engage with responsible authorities to include production and supply of EGS as a part of the larger seed industry and thereby an essential sector, qualifying for the specific exemptions on COVID-19 measures for the seed industry and associated services
- Encourage NASC regional offices to approach their respective state Commissioners of Agriculture and COVID-19 Taskforce including relevant Senior Police Authorities to countersign and stamp letters issued for EGS movement and continued EGS production at NARIs
- Engage in a communication strategy to inform security forces on the seed industry designation as an essential service

### What stakeholders are involved?

- NARIs and seed companies in close collaboration with NASC and the Ministry of Agriculture at federal and state levels to work on permits and exemptions with security agencies and health authorities

### Who takes initiative? Who drives action?

- NARIs and NASC to engage immediately with the taskforces and teams responsible for approval of inter- and intrastate transport and continuation of essential services

Seed inspectors on a seed field inspection duties during the lock down. (Photo EWS)



Security Men on duty effecting Lock down restriction order, Abuja Nigeria. (Photo NASC)



# Dashboard

Outcomes of May Survey Nigeria -  
identification of FDG topics or Alerts

- Severe negative impact
- Negative impact
- Slight negative impact
- No impact; business as usual

## Seed sector operations and services

## Seed Alert May

Breeding on-station	■
Multilocational variety trials	■
Farmer variety trials	■
Variety release committee and release process	■
Production of early generation seed	■ <b>Alert 4</b>
Supply of early generation seed	■ <b>Alert 4</b>
Field inspection for seed quality assurance	■ <b>Alert 3</b>
Laboratory testing for seed quality assurance	■ <b>Alert 3</b>
Access agro-inputs for seed production	■
Access to labour for seed production	■
Field operations for seed production	■
Post-harvest practices for seed marketing	■
Seed import	■
Seed & variety promotion	■
COVID-19 measures on mobility	■ <b>Alert 1</b>
Mobility of seed companies to point of sales/agro-dealers	■ <b>Alert 1</b>
Mobility of farmers to point of sales/agro-dealers	■ <b>Alert 1</b>
Mobility farmers to informal markets	■ <b>Alert 1</b>
Accessibility informal seed sources	■
Presence of substandard seed in markets	■
Sales of quality seed	■
Government funding of services	■
Government investment in marketing and distribution	■
Seed sector information sharing and coordination	■
Affordability of quality seed to farmers	■ <b>Alert 2</b>
Farmer cash availability	■ <b>Alert 2</b>
Farmer willingness to pay for quality seed	■ <b>Alert 2</b>
Quantity and quality of seed sown	■
Quantity and quality of produce harvested	■
Food and income security	■

## Rapid Assessment & Seed Alert

To avoid a food and hunger crisis following the current COVID-19 health crisis, urgent action is needed to address key agricultural challenges, including bottlenecks identified in the seed sector. The Rapid Assessment is conducted at country level through a survey and focus group discussions. On at least a monthly basis, reiterations of a Rapid Assessment identify alerts and actions, and Seed Alerts are published. [More details on the methodology and steps can be accessed through this link. \(https://bit.ly/sectoralertMETH\)](https://bit.ly/sectoralertMETH)

### Purpose

The purpose of the Seed Alert is to assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the functioning of the seed sector. The project operates in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nigeria and Uganda, where Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCIDI) collaborates with partners in seed programmes. [More details on the Rapid Assessments Project for the Seed Sector can be accessed through this link. \(https://bit.ly/seedalertINTRO\)](https://bit.ly/seedalertINTRO)

### Rapid Assessment methodology and Alerts in other sectors

The Rapid Assessment is conducted at country level through a survey and focus group discussions (FGDs) inspired by the model of sector transformation developed by AidEnvironment. It is also being adapted by WCIDI for use in other sectors including , horticulture, dairy and sesame. More details on the methodology and steps used in the rapid assessment and development of the current document can be accessed through this link. During the pilot phase, likewise Alerts are foreseen to cover the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the functioning of the horticultural and dairy sectors in partners countries. Also its use for other specific commodities such as cocoa, sesame and potato is explored.

Working with a similar model of rapid assessment in various sectors and countries over a time series allows for interpretation and synthesis of the impact of the

COVID-19 crisis on food systems at national, regional and global levels, while also gaining insights in coping strategies addressing emerging challenges and their outcomes. It furthermore provides insights into the

use of the sector transformation model guiding this type of interventions, enhancing the functioning and resilience of agricultural sectors and food systems.

### Institutional reference

The Seed Alert Nigeria is the result of a collaborative project that brings together experts from Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCIDI), National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) and Sahel Consulting Agriculture & Nutrition Limited.

The Seed Alert Nigeria involved in the survey and focus group discussions representatives of the following organizations:

- National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC)
- National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB)
- National Varietal Release Committee (NVRC)
- All Farmers' Association of Nigeria (AFAN)
- Maize Association of Nigeria (MAAN)
- Nigeria Agro-dealer Network
- North Central Agri-Input Dealers Association (NOCAIDA)
- Seed Entrepreneurs' Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN)
- Dupont Pioneer Seeds Limited
- Premier Seeds Limited
- Tecni Seeds Limited
- Institute For Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T)
- National Agricultural Extension Research Liaison Services (NAERLS)
- National Cereal Research Institute (NCRI)
- Ahmadu Bello University (ABU)
- Ebonyi State University
- Technical University Ibadan
- University of Agriculture Abeokuta
- Agricultural Graduate Association of Nigeria (AGAN)

The Seed Alerts are published for multiple countries and are part of the WCIDI Sector Transformation publications.  
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Please cite as: "Seed Alert Nigeria number 1. Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, National Agricultural Seeds Council and Sahel Consulting, May 2020" (date 12 May 2020)

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