



## **East-West Seed - protecting the food chain during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, East-West Seed continues to get its vegetable seeds as close to its smallholder farmers as possible. Disruption of vegetable farming now could lead to shortages of nutritious vegetables in the near future. Vegetable farmers need continued access to seeds and other essential agriculture inputs.

Working together with other seed companies, central and local governments, we are doing our utmost to get exemptions from lockdowns in order to minimize the impact on farming.

- Dr. Kanokwan Chodchoey, The Asia & Pacific Seed Association (APSA) Executive Director, has issued a statement to address and allay concerns about impacts of coronavirus on seed trade in Asia and the Pacific. “Seed is a fundamental link in the food supply chain and the season and cycles for sowing, harvesting and production should not be delayed as it would gravely impact the livelihoods of millions of farmers, and thus our food security. Therefore, it is very important to get full support from concerned government agencies to ensure that all relative services such as laboratory testing and phytosanitary certification and clearance, continue to operate at full capacity.” - added Dr. Kanokwan Chodchoey
- APSA has recently confirmed with the Department of Agriculture in Thailand that all imported seed trade services will continue to be offered as usual, and that shipments of all agriculture inputs, including seed, will not be affected.
- In the Philippines, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is giving “Food Lane” passes that allow producers, manufacturers, and traders in the food and agriculture sector, including East-West Seed, to pass quarantine checkpoints to ensure continuous movement of food and agricultural commodities. In addition, DA released a Memorandum Circular emphasizing that all agricultural supply stores must be allowed to operate under a skeletal workforce and all farmers, farm workers, and agribusiness personnel shall be exempted from home quarantine if they do not exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19, the number of working farmers and personnel is at a minimum, and they are practicing social distancing and other safety measures.
- The Department of Trade and Industry has also assured that establishments in the agriculture sector will be allowed to operate during the Enhanced Community Quarantine and that movement of their cargo and transit of personnel will be unrestricted.



- The country's seed sector, represented by the Philippine Seed Industry Association, has also given its support by reaffirming to local government units that agricultural supply shops are essential to ensuring adequate food supply and should be allowed to operate, as long as health and sanitation protocols are in place.
- While in India, manufacturers of seeds have requested the government to ensure transportation of key farm inputs so that there is no roadblock due to the measures being taken to handle the coronavirus. Since the next three months are critical for farmers to prepare for kharif season, the seed industry has sought government's help to ensure there is adequate production, processing, packing and transportation, and timely supply of seeds to meet demands.
- "The government must support uninterrupted and high-speed operation of seed factories especially in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The government may consider allowing offices, which provide critical services like laboratory testing and issuance of phyto-sanitary permits, to remain open with a minimal workforce," said the director general of Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSII).

The health and safety of each individual and all our teams around the world also play a key role during these testing times. We take safety measures seriously, we go beyond the necessary: we ensure all our employees are safe, we encourage working from home and a safe working space by maintaining social distancing at all our facilities.

Disruptions in logistics could get worse, so our teams are making sure our inventory is close to where our vegetable growers continue to farm.

We started East-West Seed almost forty years ago, but our mission remains the same: to improve the lives of farmers working in the most challenging environments imaginable. These vegetable growers - like our company - face all the adversities of Mother Nature: whether droughts, floods or pests. Forty years of falling and getting up again, pioneering and experimenting. Never giving up.

As a result, the resilience of our teams has been tested many times over. And each time, after each crisis, our employees, vegetable farmers and our business partners came out stronger together. External stress makes a species stronger. This time is no different.



## **About East-West Seed:**

Founded in 1982 by Dutch seedsman Simon Groot, the 2019 World Food Prize Laureate, East-West Seed is one of the world's leading vegetable seed companies in Asia and expanding rapidly in Africa and Latin America. The privately-owned company has played an important role in the development and improvement of tropical vegetable varieties that are adapted to tropical markets and growing conditions. Its mission is to provide innovative products and services that help to improve the livelihood of vegetable farmers. In addition, East-West Seed trains vegetable farmers in order to help maximize their yield and income through better knowledge on vegetable production and farming skills.

In 2019 it ranked number 1 on the Access to Seeds Index for Global Seed Companies and number 1 for South and Southeast Asia Index. In 2016 it ranked number 1 on the Access to Seeds Global Index for Vegetable Seed Companies and on the Regional Index for Eastern Africa.

East-West Seed has its headquarters in Nonthaburi, Thailand. The company employs about 5,000 people and has 12 R&D establishments in 6 countries. With exports to over 60 countries in tropical areas, East-West Seed serves nearly 20 million farmers around the world.

For more information about East-West Seed, please visit [www.eastwestseed.com](http://www.eastwestseed.com)

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