



FSII urges Government to maintain uninterrupted and timely transboundary movement of farm inputs for steady supply of food & feed

New Delhi, March 23, 2020: Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSII) supports the efforts taken by the Government of India to avert further spread and impact of COVID-19. We also applaud the efforts of those working tirelessly to protect our population and stand ready to support the farming communities that are continuously working to ensure a stable food supply during these testing times. Next three months are critical for the farmers and for the food security of the country, as the farmers are preparing for the Kharif season. The seed industry is working tirelessly to ensure that there is adequate production, processing, packing transportation and timely supply of seeds to meet farmer's needs.

Seed companies undertook the largest volume of seed production in the just concluded rabi season and the seed is arriving from the fields at the plants right now. Seed companies are busy cleaning, grading, processing and packing this huge volume of seeds now. The seed industry employs a large workforce from March to May for seed processing, packing and transportation. It is critical for the food security of the country that this whole process is seamless and does not encounter roadblocks due to the measures being taken to handle Carona virus.

Towards this, a letter is submitted by FSII urging the Government of India and State Governments to support the uninterrupted and timely global and domestic movements of farm inputs like seeds, agricultural produce and food. These products should be allowed access to quarantine checkpoints to ensure continuous production of staple and essential food items. There should be opening of 'green lanes' / special food lanes at national and state toll booths, check-posts and on highways where food and agricultural input delivery vehicles can pass unhindered and are not subjected to roadblocks which might have been put up to restrict movement of people and other materials to fight the virus. The special food lanes will allow smooth passage of all vehicles carrying essential food commodities and agri-inputs. Several countries like Philippines, Thailand and China have also adopted similar measures.

Mr Ram Kaundinya, Director General, FSII said, "The government must support uninterrupted and high-speed operation of seed factories especially in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The Govt may consider allowing offices, which provide critical services like laboratory testing and issuance of phytosanitary permits, to remain open with a minimal workforce. We need to do this while keeping everyone safe. This will enable the Indian seed industry to deliver adequate supply of good quality seeds to farmers and secure their income, while ensuring food security for the nation and good health & nutrition for consumers. FSII member companies are committed to adhering and implementing national and local health directives to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and are adopting the highest health precautions and hygiene measures for the health & safety of their office and factory employees. Our members are working tirelessly to ensure that farmers are well equipped, the supply is steady and that there is no surge in prices of crops and vegetables in coming months due to non-availability of seeds."



Dr Shivendra Bajaj, Executive Director, FSII said, “April and May are the most critical months for supply of seeds for timely sowing of Kharif crops like maize, soybean, wheat, rice, chickpea, jowar, bajra, cotton, pearl millet etc. Farmers are at the forefront to safeguard the food and feed supply and if they miss this window there will be serious shortages in the rest of the year. We cannot afford it to happen in these already volatile times. Especially the States where seeds are produced, processed and packed have to take proactive approach towards this effort.

The seed industry is working continuously to provide quality seeds and solutions to the farming community for maintaining a stable food supply and looks to governments to continue to treat food production as an essential component under the current circumstances. We stand ready to cooperate and assist in any way needed to ensure food security does not further increase this challenge.”