



Better seed for more and better forages and pastures production

Forages

Term used to define annual or perennial crops grown for whole crop grazing by livestock or harvested for feed

Pastures

Term used to distinguish intensively managed grazing systems through sowing, irrigation, fertilizer application from extensively managed rangelands in which native vegetation grow with no agronomic intervention

Cultivar & variety

Terms used interchangeably but cultivars refer to plant populations such as local varieties with less uniformity

What is seed?

Seed is a mature ovule of a plant inflorescent consisting of an embryonic plant, a seed coat and endosperm or cotyledon used for food, feed, medication but not ideal for propagation

What is quality seed?

Quality seed is a biological input and output specifically used for further seed multiplication and use in crop production. As such, seed is an agriculture input with significant contribution to both forage yield and quality whereas grain is used for purposes other than planting

Challenges

Quality seed production is a challenge in many forage and pasture species for farmers. It improves technical supervision, specialized facilities, inputs and training on crop management, post-harvest seed operations for seed production

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For most forage and pasture crops, seed is the main medium for propagation and transfer of genetic potentials in varieties and cultivars to crop producers and users

- Forages and pasture crop varieties and cultivars are developed and grown mainly for animal feed
- The main targeted traits in the breeding and selection programs are not grain but also biomass productivity and quality
- Most of the forage and pasture varieties and cultivars retain wild seed setting, physical and physiological seed characteristics such as low synchronized flowering and maturity, susceptibility to shattering, high physical and/or physiological dormancy leading to low seed viability and germination
- To maximize benefits from improved forages and pasture varieties and cultivars, producers are strongly advised to use certified seed from accredited and reputed seed companies

To face these challenges, the **Red Meat Value Chain Project** will contribute to the improvement of forage and pasture seed production in Tunisia through:

- Modernization of the pasture seed processing and quality control facilities
- Improving the pasture seed production and post-harvest seed operation procedures by training
- Promoting public-private-producer partnership building on forage seed system development and diversification by facilitating a stakeholders' workshop at national level on the subject

Why quality seed matters?

Quality seed is a major agriculture input that farmers can trust because it is:

- A well-defined product from a distinct, uniform and stable plant population with specifically desirable traits known as variety or cultivar
- A product with a clear and specific genealogy by which it can be traced back to its origin
- A product subjected to strict quality assurance system to meet the farmers and the end users specific productivity and quality requirements



- A product with known quality attributes namely genetic identity, varietal purity, physical purity, adequate viability and germination capacity, free from noxious weeds, seed transmitted diseases, high productivity and product quality
- A product with clearly visible and guaranteed quality standards through a formal label generated through a rigorous seed certification procedures at field and laboratory
- A product which protects you land from noxious weed and seed transmitted diseases
- A product which helps reduce weed population by optimizing plant population density, increasing forage and pasture yield and quality thus maximizing profitability

Role of improved seeds

Forage and pasture seed industries are interdependent. A vibrant livestock industry plays a crucial role in the national economy but requires a steady flow of high quality forage and pasture for which quality seed of improved varieties are the backbone

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About ICARDA

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