

**Australian
Seed Federation**



National Code of Practice *Use of Seed Treatments*

August 2026



© Australian Seed Federation 2026

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted by the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Australian Seed Federation Limited. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction rights should be directed to the Australian Seed Federation, PO Box 444, Curtin, Canberra.



Table of Contents

1. Meeting user expectations.....	1
1.1. Aim	
1.2. Scope	
2. How seed treatments are applied.....	1
2.1. Application rate	
3. Label directions.....	2-3
3.1. Chemical/Additive treatment	
3.2. Biological treatment	
3.3. For single species of treated non-horticultural seed	
3.4. For Mixtures that contain one or more component/s of treated non-horticultural seed	
4. Record keeping.....	3
5. Accreditation.....	3-4
5.1. Responsibilities of the applicator	
5.2. Accreditation criteria	
6. Audit process.....	4-5
6.1. Scope	
6.2. Evidence of compliance	
6.3. Laboratory testing	
6.4. Audit outcomes	
6.5. Audit records	
7. Compliance and non-compliance implications.....	5
7.1. Compliance	
7.2. Non-compliance	

DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this document is only to raise awareness of participants in the seed industry. Australian Seed Federation Limited (ASF) makes no warranty or representation that this document is accurate, complete, reliable or up to date. Before adopting any idea, practice or method referred in this document industry participants must for their own protection obtain advice from experts qualified to advise in the fields relevant to them. ASF has no liability for loss or damage direct or consequential which may be incurred whilst relying on the whole or any part of this document.



1. Meeting user expectations

Farmers, distributors and regulatory authorities have high expectations regarding the quality of a seed treatment and its application to the seed. The expectations are that seed treatment will provide high performance and safety in processes and products. The Australian Seed Federation recognises that seed treatment supports "Added Seed Value" (e.g. safe emergence, seedling establishment, crop stands, yield and crop quality).

1.1. Aim

This Code of Practice seeks to ensure that all treated seed for sowing sold under the ASF logo has been treated safely, accurately and efficiently in accordance with current regulatory and industry best practice methods.

1.2. Scope

The Code applies to the process of seed treatment application to all sowing seed (not including seed treatment for control of seed storage pests). The Code will reference relevant legislation.

2. How seed treatments are applied

Seed treatment is a term that describes both products and processes. The usage of specific products and specific application techniques can improve the growth environment for seeds, seedlings, and young plants. Seed treatment complexity ranges from a basic dressing to coating, pelleting and encrusting:

Seed Dressing: The most common method of seed treatment. The seed is dressed with either dry formulation or wet treated with a slurry or liquid formulation. Dressings are applied either by farmer users or contract professional applicators.

Film Coating: A special binder is used with a formulation to enhance adherence of the product to the seed. Coatings require advanced treatment technology and are applied exclusively by professional applicators.

Seed Coating/Pelleting/Encrusting: The most sophisticated seed treatment technology. This results in changing the physical shape of a seed to enhance flowability, plantability and handling. These treatments require specialised application machinery and techniques and are applied by professional applicators.

2.1 Application rate

In Australia, a risk assessment is conducted on all agricultural chemical products including seed treatments, by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), during the registration process. This ensures that when used in accordance with label directions, chemical crop protection products present no unacceptable risk to users, consumers or the environment.

The overriding objective of this Code is to ensure that applicators comply with the label rates of application. The amount of product applied to the seed must comply with the rate specified on the label. It is essential that the product be evenly distributed over all seeds.

DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this document is only to raise awareness of participants in the seed industry. Australian Seed Federation Limited (ASF) makes no warranty or representation that this document is accurate, complete, reliable or up to date. Before adopting any idea, practice or method referred in this document industry participants must for their own protection obtain advice from experts qualified to advise in the fields relevant to them. ASF has no liability for loss or damage direct or consequential which may be incurred whilst relying on the whole or any part of this document.



3. Label Directions

3.1. Chemical/Additive treatment (mandatory)

The statement on the parcel, or label attached thereto, to set out all chemical/additive treatments to which the seeds have been subjected and should be expressed as:

“CAUTION – TREATED WITH (common or brand name of a fungicidal/insecticidal seed dressing), DO NOT USE FOR FOOD, ANIMAL FEED OR OIL

All wording required by this sub-section should be shown in red, where chosen printing format permits, on a contrasting background.

To ensure conformity with APVMA regulations, all chemical seed treatment applied to seed for sowing must include a distinctive colouring agent.

3.2. Biological treatment (mandatory)

The statement on the parcel, or label attached thereto, to set out all chemical/additive treatment to which the seeds have been subjected and should be expressed as:

“IMPORTANT - SEED TREATED WITH A LIVE MICROORGANISM” with accompanying information of:

Date of application

Batch or lot number

By (name and address)

3.3. For single species of treated non-horticultural seed

Where the treating process adds more than 5% to the weight of the raw seed and is packed in parcels of 10 kilograms or greater, it is mandatory for one of the following to be present on the label:

- The % by weight of seed or
- The seed count expressed as seeds/pellets per kg or Thousand Seed Weight.

It is optional to include both on the label. For audit purposes, compliance with the stated amounts above to be within +/- 10%.

3.4. For Mixtures that contain one or more component/s of treated non-horticultural seed

Where the treating process adds more than 5% to the weight of the bare seed and is packed in parcels of 10 kilograms or greater, refer to Section 8.6 of the Code of Practice for Labelling and Marketing (see below):

Where bare seed and/or dressed seed from two or more different species is mixed together to the purchaser's or vendors specifications, the vendor is required to advise the purchaser that the labelling information is available for each lot of seed to be used in the mixture; the vendor is to provide the purchaser with a written statement identifying the lots of seed used in the mixture and the statement to be endorsed with the words:

“Details of the CUSTOM MIXTURE components available on request”, and the parcel is to be marked with the words ‘CUSTOM MIXTURE’.

DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this document is only to raise awareness of participants in the seed industry. Australian Seed Federation Limited (ASF) makes no warranty or representation that this document is accurate, complete, reliable or up to date. Before adopting any idea, practice or method referred in this document industry participants must for their own protection obtain advice from experts qualified to advise in the fields relevant to them. ASF has no liability for loss or damage direct or consequential which may be incurred whilst relying on the whole or any part of this document.



Upon such a request, the vendor will supply the purchaser details of component purity, germination, and for treated seed the % by weight of seed and/or seed count (seeds/ pellets per kg or Thousand Seed Weight) as applicable or as desired by the purchaser. Seed mixtures below 25kgs of turf seeds shall be labelled as follows:

- *lot number of the blend*
- *species expressed by %weight or count*
- *average minimum germination*
- *name and address of vendor/packer*
- *sow before (date)*

The product label is designed to give advice and detailed information regarding the effective and safe use of the chemical in addition to the target pest or disease, registered crop and prescribed application rate. The label also has information on correct product storage, handling and precautions for safe use.

The onus is on the applicator to ensure the product is used according to the label specifications. That is, it should not be used for any purpose, or in any manner, contrary to the label unless authorised under appropriate legislation. An off-label permit issued by the APVMA being an example.

4. Record Keeping

Who is responsible? The applicator

Why records should be kept? To substantiate adherence to application rates and other requirements as per the label.

What type of records should be kept? Record of the actual Seed Treatment Rate per line of seed. (This is the quantity of product per quantity of seed). A representative sample should be kept for one sowing season. This should be labelled with the lot number and stored in an insect and rodent proof area.

or production department evidence of seed health management programs. Any testing for plant pathogens is to be carried out in accordance with internationally recognised protocols.

5. Accreditation

5.1. Responsibilities of the applicator

Interpreting label information (including shelf life of product):

- Record Keeping
- Seed samples
- Calibration
- Rate of application for each product
- Seed Treatment product(s) brand

Knowledge of factors affecting seed loadings:

- Grain quality
- "Slurry" mix and quantity per tonne
- Primary versus secondary application distribution

Knowledge of how the losses of applied chemicals can occur:

- Variations in formulations
- Over handling
- Poor application methods
- Poor storage of seed treatment
- Poor quality water mix and contaminations

DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this document is only to raise awareness of participants in the seed industry. Australian Seed Federation Limited (ASF) makes no warranty or representation that this document is accurate, complete, reliable or up to date. Before adopting any idea, practice or method referred in this document industry participants must for their own protection obtain advice from experts qualified to advise in the fields relevant to them. ASF has no liability for loss or damage direct or consequential which may be incurred whilst relying on the whole or any part of this document.



The qualified and trained personnel will understand and will follow the label instructions:

- To ensure the registered rate and application technique is used.
- To ensure all treated seed is labelled as per ASF Code of Practice for Seed Labelling and Marketing.
- To ensure the product is applied for its registered usage only.

5.2. Accreditation criteria

Accreditation will be granted to the applicator by the ASF upon demonstrated competency in the above areas.

6. Audit Process

The purpose of the biennial audit is to confirm that accredited seed treaters continue to operate in accordance with this Code of Practice. Audits are intended to support continuous improvement and provide confidence that the requirements of the Code are being implemented.

Unless otherwise advised, audits are conducted as a desktop review by ASF and are provided at no cost to the accredited seed treater.

6.1. Scope

The audit may include a review of:

- Treatment records and associated documentation.
- Chemical use records, including compliance with label directions and shelf-life requirements.
- Procedures relating to seed treatment and quality assurance.
- Records demonstrating compliance with this code of practice.
- Any corrective actions arising from previous audits, where applicable.

6.2. Evidence of compliance

To demonstrate compliance with the Code, accredited seed treaters may be requested to provide examples of relevant records or documentation. Examples may include:

- Treated seed records.
- Treatment batch records.
- Sample identification records (where retained as part of normal business practice).
- Product labelling information.
- Other records relevant to demonstrating compliance with this Code.

6.3. Laboratory testing

Laboratory testing is not a routine component of the audit process.

Where an auditor identifies a matter requiring further verification, the auditor may recommend that representative samples be submitted for independent laboratory analysis to assess compliance with relevant aspects of the Code.

The circumstances under which laboratory testing may be requested, and responsibility for associated costs, will be determined by ASF in consultation with the accredited seed treater.

DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this document is only to raise awareness of participants in the seed industry. Australian Seed Federation Limited (ASF) makes no warranty or representation that this document is accurate, complete, reliable or up to date. Before adopting any idea, practice or method referred in this document industry participants must for their own protection obtain advice from experts qualified to advise in the fields relevant to them. ASF has no liability for loss or damage direct or consequential which may be incurred whilst relying on the whole or any part of this document.



6.4. Audit outcomes

Following completion of the audit, ASF will advise the accredited seed treater of the outcome, which may include:

- Confirmation of continued accreditation.
- Recommendations for continuous improvement.
- Corrective actions where required.
- Follow-up review where additional information is required.

6.5. Audit records

Individual audit reports will remain confidential.

- ASF will maintain an official register of accredited seed treaters and audit records.
- Summary information may be reported to the ASF Board
- Individual audit reports will be provided to the accredited seed treater and, where applicable, any authorised third party.

7. Compliance and non-compliance implications

In the case of compliance/non-compliance as evidenced from an audit, the following procedures shall apply:

7.1. Compliance

The auditor is to notify the applicator (and where applicable the third party) in writing about the successful audit.

- ASF is to renew the applicators' accreditation.

7.2. Non-compliance

The auditor is to notify the applicator (and where applicable the third party) in writing of all areas of non-compliance.

- The auditor may recommend suspension of accreditation to the ASF.
- The auditor is to detail areas of non-compliance, recommend corrective action and specify a time frame for corrective action.
- A re-audit is to occur within a specified time frame to ensure that the corrective action has been implemented.
- The auditor is to make a final recommendation regarding re-affirmation or removal of accreditation.
- The applicator (and where appropriate the third party) will be advised on the reaffirmation or removal of accreditation.
- An applicator may dispute the auditor's results and recommendations at his/her own cost may request the ASF to appoint a second auditor. The recommendations of the second auditor will be final.
- Where possible the auditor will seek to have non-conformances remedied whilst onsite.
- Suspension of accreditation will be used as a last resort.

For more information on the ASF's Code of Practice for the Use of Seed Treatments, please contact ASF on 02 6282 6822 or enquiry@ausseed.org.au

DISCLAIMER

The purpose of this document is only to raise awareness of participants in the seed industry. Australian Seed Federation Limited (ASF) makes no warranty or representation that this document is accurate, complete, reliable or up to date. Before adopting any idea, practice or method referred in this document industry participants must for their own protection obtain advice from experts qualified to advise in the fields relevant to them. ASF has no liability for loss or damage direct or consequential which may be incurred whilst relying on the whole or any part of this document.