



MEDIA RELEASE

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Agriculture industry launches guide to promote safe use of seed treatments

A guide to promote the safe handling and management of treated seed, for the benefit of safety to people, insects, animals and the environment, is being launched today.

The New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association (NZGSTA) and Agcarm, industry associations representing the seed industry and the crop protection industries respectively, have announced the release of The Guide to Seed Treatment Stewardship.

The 32-page document is primarily for seed treaters and seed companies to guide their management and handling of treated seed according to regulations and best practice. It combines seed treatment research and safety information from universities, seed companies, international seed associations and others.

But the guide is also useful for farmers who have purchased treated seed and are looking for best practice information about planting, handling, and disposal of any surplus seed.

Seed treatments allow farmers to grow crops tailored to cope with disease, insects and weeds, thereby increasing productivity of their land. Seed treatments help manage diseases and insect pests from sowing until the crop is established, reducing the need for spraying.

Some of the products used for seed treatments, such as insecticides, present risks to bees, particularly if dust is released during planting of the seed. The guide describes how to minimise the risks, covering each stage of the process from transporting seeds, to storage, use and disposal.

The risks of using chemical products in seed treatments have been rigorously assessed by the Environmental Protection Authority and global regulators. Industry wants to ensure that risks are managed in accordance with regulations and best practice to further reduce any potential impacts on pollinators, animals, people and the environment.

The guide contains recommendations for such processes as:

- Selection of treated product.
- Safe use of treated seed.
- Safe handling and transport of seed.
- Treated seed labelling.
- Storage of treated seed.
- What to do with spilled seed.

“Farmers have been using seed treatments for centuries to suppress, control, or repel plant diseases, insects, and other pests. There’s no question that today’s modern seed treatments are enabling New Zealand farmers to realise greater yields, healthier crops, and higher revenues,” said Graeme Peters, chief executive of Agcarm.

“Like farming, there’s a science to using treated seeds successfully, both to achieve best crop results and to avoid accidents that may harm non-target organisms. The crop protection industry, which makes seed treatments, and the seed treatment industry focussed on the best practice techniques for managing and handling treated seeds,” said Thomas Chin, chief executive of the NZGSTA.

In addition to offering safety advice for people handling treated seed, the guide includes techniques for mitigating risks to pollinators, animals, and waterways, including measures to minimise dust and pesticide drift, and emphasises the importance of the correct use of planter technology.

The guide is a New Zealand industry initiative adapted from a publication by a similar successful partnership between the American Seed Trade Association and CropLife America.

- The Guide to Seed Treatment Stewardship is available on the [Agcarm website](#) and the [New Zealand Seed and Trade Association website](#).

About NZGSTA

The New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association (NZGSTA) exists to foster the business environment for its members. NZGSTA comprises of 80 companies who not only breed seed, but also research, produce, process and market the nation's grain and seed outputs. This involves both importing and exporting. Some NZGSTA members produce seed under contract. Others sell seed or licenses for advanced pastoral seed technologies including forages, animal-friendly fungal endophytes, pasture legumes and more.

About Agcarm

Agcarm is the industry association which represents crop protection, animal health and rural supplier businesses. Agcarm members distribute and sell the majority of veterinary medicines and crop protection products in New Zealand. Agcarm members promote responsible use of products right through the product life cycle, from research to disposal.

Agcarm is also a positive voice for its members and lobbies for a progressive regulatory environment.

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