

ISF WARNS AGAINST UNSOLICITED SEED PACKAGES

Nyon, Switzerland – The International Seed Federation (ISF) advises the public to refer to their national agricultural officials in the event that they receive unsolicited seed packages.

This follows reports received by ISF that some individuals in different countries (e.g. North America, New Zealand, Australia, Japan and Europe) have received unsolicited seed packages of unknown origin.

“National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) are currently working on identifying these seeds and evaluating the risk that they pose to the environment. Therefore, if you receive seed packages via mail that you have not ordered, please refer to your national agricultural official as soon as possible. You should only plant and use seeds from known and trusted sources,” said Michael Keller, secretary general of ISF.

Seeds undergo routine testing by seed companies before they are commercially distributed to prevent or control plant pests that may affect seed quality, seed movement, and their introduction into new territories. However, seeds of unknown origin carry no guarantee of having undergone these important testing procedures and could lead to the introduction of different types of plant pests and invasive species to the environment.

“Seed health is a very important topic for the seed industry. Quality seed is an expectation from growers. To meet these expectations, company seed health programs focus on the prevention, detection, and eradication of pathogens,” said Keller.

Global initiatives on seed health

Healthy seeds, free from known seed transmitted pathogens, are a prerequisite for sustainable food production. Keeping seeds, and consequently plants, healthy is crucial to ensure sustainable agriculture and food systems, as well as to protect the environment and ecosystems. ISF is working towards making the best quality seed accessible to all, to support food security and sustainable agriculture.

The International Seed Health Initiative for Vegetable Crops (ISHI-Veg) – an industry platform formed in 1993 under ISF’s support and governance – aims to secure the delivery of sufficiently healthy seed to customers by developing methods for seed health testing that are internationally recognized as reference methods and accepted as industry standards.

The seed industry also plays a significant role in gathering and sharing knowledge. The Regulated Pest List Initiative (RPLI) was launched in 2007 and has resulted in a dynamic database of information on regulated pests of internationally traded seed species, based on a scientific assessment of whether they are a pest risk and the experience of the seed industry in managing this risk. #

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About ISF

ISF is the voice of the global seed sector. It has represented the interests of its members since 1924, and represents 96% of the international seed trade today. With a global reach extending to members around the world and official observer status in intergovernmental and international organizations, ISF is uniquely positioned to assist in the development of government policy and business strategy.

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