

A Note on the Importance of Seed Multiplication Work in
Cotton in Maximising Production and Suggestions
to overcome the Difficulties met with in
the Procurement of Seeds *

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Of all achievements made by the Agricultural Department for maximising production and increasing the income of the cultivators, the evolution of improved strains of crops is the most important one. Even the worst critic of the Department cannot but admit the advantages derived by the cultivators by growing the departmental strains. Since a good deal of attention is paid by the cotton breeders to evolve a strain combining good yield, higher ginning percentage and better staple, growers of departmental strains are benefitted not only by the increased yield that they get, but also by the higher price offered to their produce on account of its higher ginning percentage and better staple. In order to see that the ryots derive the benefit of growing improved strains, sufficient quantity of pure seeds of improved strains should be made available to them. In pulses and cereal crops the cultivators generally gather their own seeds from the previous crop and keep for their next sowings. But in Cotton, this practice cannot be followed due to the peculiar nature of the produce and its method of marketing. The cotton growers invariably sell their produce as kapas and purchase their requirements of seeds every year from other sources. Unless the Department runs seed multiplication schemes for each and every strain of Cotton, with a view to supply pure seeds of these new strains to the cultivators every year, the strains evolved by laborious work at great cost will lose its value by getting mixed with other varieties, and the cultivators cannot get their requirements of pure seed. Thus the work of seed multiplication in cotton assumes greater importance than in the case of grain crops.

Procurement work of cotton seeds from seed farm ryots bristles with difficulties due to the peculiar nature of the commercial crop and its highly fluctuating prices. Unlike cereals or pulses which can be purchased directly from the producers, cotton seeds cannot be purchased from the growers as the seeds cannot be easily extracted from the produce (Kapas) except with the aid of a machine. Since the more valuable portion of the kapas is lint, the cotton seed is treated as a product of lesser importance in trade. Cotton growers have always been in the habit of selling their produce only in the form of kapas. It has not been a practice with the ordinary ryot to gin his produce and dispose of the lint and seed separately. So delivery of seed to the Department by individual ryots is not a practical proposition. Introduction of Cotton

* Summary of Paper contributed for College Day & Conference 1952.

Control order fixing ceiling prices for lint has made the situation worse, since the prices for kapas always ruled high and there was no parity between lint and kapas prices. The growers would get the maximum profit only if they dispose of their produce in the form of kapas. So the department has to make arrangements to procure the seed through merchants or ginning factories. Since, kapas prices will be highly fluctuating according to supply and demand, the ryots would not easily part with their kapas till they get the most advantageous price for their produce. Sometimes they keep the produce even after the sowing of the next crop. A portion of the seedfarm produce is thus denied for procurement. Another difficulty is due to the competition among merchants, in the purchase of kapas. They go to the villages and purchase seed farm kapas at higher prices without the knowledge of the Department. Of late, many of the seed farm ryots do not honour the seedfarm agreements they have executed. So a good portion of the seedfarm produce is sold outside without notice to the Department.

Another difficulty is also met with in procurement. Most of the seedfarm ryots are in need of money after the harvest is over. They at the same time, are unwilling to part with their kapas at the prevailing prices, as they are anxious to wait for better prices. Since, there is no provision to give loan to seed farm ryots on the pledge of their produce, the ryots take their produce to the ginning factories and take loan from the owners on the pledge of their kapas. Such ryots generally have to sell their kapas to the factory or merchant who has financed them, and the seed is thereby lost to the Department.

Procurement of seed farm kapas can be made easy if the following suggestions are adopted.

1. The seed farm cotton should be given an attractive premium over non-seed farm cotton in order to prevent seed farm ryots from selling their kapas to merchants. A premium of 15% over the prices of non-seed farm cotton is suggested. This premium should be made available only to such cotton, the seeds of which are procured by the Department for sowing.

2. The premium paid for the seed should be raised to 40% over Cattlefood rate in order to make it profitable for the ryots to gin their kapas and sell the seed to the Department.

3. The seed farm ryots should be given an advance to the limit of 70% of the value of kapas brought by them to the ginning factory fixed by the Department to prevent the seed farm ryots from pledging their stock with ginning factories and merchants.

If the Department can guarantee prices for seed farm cotton higher than those offered by other agencies there cannot be any difficulty in the procurement of seed farm produce.