

Draft Seeds Bill, 2025

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Why in news?

The draft of the Seeds Bill, 2025, recently released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

- The draft bill seeks to replace the existing <u>Seeds Act</u>, <u>1966 & Seeds</u> (Control) Order, <u>1983</u>.
- **Objective** To regulate the quality, sale, import, and export of seeds; ensure availability of quality seeds to farmers; and promote private sector participation.

Key provisions

- Mandatory Registration All seed varieties for sale must be registered, and all seed producers, processors, and dealers must also be registered and licensed to operate.
- Quality Control It ensures that all seeds meet minimum standards for germination, purity, traits, and health as per <u>Indian Minimum Seed</u> <u>Certification Standards</u>.
- Import & Innovation The Central Government can allow the import of unregistered seed varieties for *research & trial purposes* (such imports must meet specific conditions set by the government).
- Liberalized import norms to promote access to global seed varieties & technologies in India.
- Implemented by It defines the constitution and roles of *Central & State Seeds Committees* to oversee implementation.
- Validity The initial registration for a new seed variety is valid to encourage innovation -
 - 15 years for annual and biennial crops.
 - 18 years for long-duration perennial crops.
- Penalties 3 categories of offenses -

- **Trivial** Involve procedural lapses like delayed registration renewal; penalized with warnings or small fines to ease compliance.
- Minor Include mislabeling or non-disclosure of seed data; attract moderate fines or suspension of registration.
- Major Cover serious violations like selling spurious seeds or fraud;
 subject to heavy fines and possible imprisonment (maxi punishment Fine up to Rs. 30 lakh, Jail term up to 3 years)
- **Deregulation** of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) would **remove their sole authority** over approving crop variety trials, allowing other accredited entities to participate in the testing process.
- Farmer Rights & Exemptions The Bill protects a farmer's right to save, use, exchange, or sell their own farm seeds *without registration*, provided they do not sell them under a brand name.
- Appellate Authority The <u>Central Government</u> will establish <u>single or</u> multi-person authorities to handle appeals regarding disputes over licensing, registration, cancellation and potential compensation claims.
- **Compensation** If seeds fail to perform as expected, a farmer can claim compensation, potentially through a new speedy dispute resolution mechanism.

References

- 1. The Hindu | The Centre releases draft Seeds Bill, 2025
- 2. Indian Express | Centre releases draft Seeds Bill, 2025

