

What is seed quality?

Good quality seed:

- **Has a high germination rate.** Almost all of the seeds will sprout.
- **Produces healthy plants.** The seed was gathered from strong, productive parent plants.
- **Has nearly perfect purity.** The seed consists only of the crop advertised and will not spread unwanted plants (weeds) into the field.

See the Seed Quality Definitions Info Sheet for more information on seed quality classifications.

Why is seed quality important?

Improved seed quality helps increase yields and decrease costs. A high seed germination rate means farmers need fewer seeds to get the same number of plants. Healthy plants are more productive and more resistant to disease and environmental stressors. Pure seed does not introduce weed seeds, reducing labor costs and maximizing the resources available to the crop. Thus, good quality seed can be purchased and planted in smaller quantities than poor quality seed while still increasing crop yield, decreasing risk, and decreasing weed control costs. When farmers choose to invest in higher quality seed, it is important that they also reduce their seeding rate accordingly to maximize these benefits.

How do I find good quality seed?

Many Afghan farmers purchase seed from local bazaars in bulk. This seed is typically unlabeled and untested. Good quality seed is normally pre-packaged and labelled with important information, including a certification that the seed is safe for use in Afghanistan (see photo). Good sources of quality seed in Afghanistan include Noor Bros., Helal Group, and USAID Farm Service Centers, among others. If good quality seed is unavailable for purchase, farmers may choose to save seed from their own crop. See the Seed Saving Manual and Fact Sheets for more information.

Cost of 1kg of Seed (Afghanis) (AAEP, Kabul 2013)

Crop	Type of Seed		
	Hybrid	High Quality	Low Quality
Spinach	600	400	250
Radish	500	375	190
Turnip	1000	700	400

Relative Yield of Various Seed Qualities (AAEP Kabul 2013)

Crop	Type of Seed		
	Hybrid	High Quality	Low Quality
Spinach	150%	100%	25%
Radish	126%	100%	0%
Turnip	133%	100%	0%



Good quality seed is labeled with its germination rate, purity, variety, certification, origin, and expiration date.