

Panel Discussion: Goals in Supplying Tree Seed

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Introduction

Collection of tree seeds for nursery use involves a number of key decisions and goals in order to provide high quality, premium seeds for use in reforestation.

Quality

The following factors must be considered to ensure high quality seed: 1) selection of genetic makeup of plant material harvested; 2) care of harvested material while preparing for cleaning; 3) proper selection and method of seed cleaning; 4) sorting seeds into lots according to size (sizer); and 5) sorting by density after sized (gravity table).

Consistency

It is necessary to know when conditions are right to harvest seeds. If collection occurs too early, low viability of seeds may result. If collection occurs too late, competing factors will influence quantities of seeds collected. Competition includes wildlife, weather, and other collectors.

Good communication is extremely important. Close contact with customers on current conditions of seeds must be maintained.

Seeds should be cleaned with the same cleaning processes year after year.

Reliability

Knowledge of the market conditions is required for success in supplying seeds. Potential customers/uses may include: 1) private nurseries; 2) state nurseries; 3) export market; and 4) direct seeding projects.

Being dependable consists of balancing our demands for seeds between quality, quantity, price, and the needs of the 4 groups listed above.

Price/Value

The correlation between buyer, seller, quantities, and quality will set the price/value of seeds. In a market that has no labeling requirements as to purity, moisture content, or percentage of foreign material, we need to make sure that price equals value, and that value matches price.

In order to ensure price equals value, a number of measures can be taken, including: 1) conducting a cutting test, with the price based on the percentage of sound seeds; 2) avoiding moisture content issues by purchasing seeds according to volume rather than weight; and 3) purchasing seeds from dependable, well-established sources.