

**To: ESA Members cc.: ESA STAT**

**Dear Members,**

**Please find attached the ESA press release concerning the ‘official’ start of the ESTA scheme. May I kindly ask you to forward this information to your respective national membership, within your companies and, importantly, to your national media contacts (specifically professional press, farmers magazines etc.). All respective information and documents have also been updated on the ESA website ([www.euroseeds.org](http://www.euroseeds.org)) .**

**n.b.: the Secretariat will also inform the European Commission (DG SANCO); it would be very helpful, not least in view of the on-going discussions on a new EU Guidance Document for seed treatment, if national associations would make use of the press release and information in their contacts to the respective responsible national authorities.**

**Finally, I would like to use the opportunity to express my thanks to the ESA Working Group STAT and Ruud Scheffer who have worked very hard over the past year to bring this initiative to its current stage. It is now up to the sector to prove that we are willing and capable to successfully address the quality and safety concerns of regulators on EU and national level by an industry led assurance scheme.**

**Kind regards,**

**Garlich von Essen Secretary General**

## **ESA Press release**

### **ESTA goes live!**

#### **ESA launches European Seed Treatment Assurance scheme**

ESA European Seed Association has now officially launched its “European Seed Treatment Assurance” (ESTA) scheme for quality assurance during the application of plant protection products to seed (seed treatment) and the handling and use of treated seed.

The scheme is led by the seed sector and establishes the first comprehensive system and respective processes for quality assurance and management of seed treatment.

“We are very proud to have arrived at this point today” says Garlich v. Essen, Secretary General of ESA. “This is a milestone in the history of ESA and Europe’s seed industry!”

The scheme, a trademark protected ESA initiative, combines several elements that shall help to guarantee professional, high quality seed treatment applications. It comprises :

- a quality assurance charter (ESTA Standard) which provides the base for an independent certification of treatment sites by accredited auditors;
- a guidance for auditors (ESTA Checklist) to promote and simplify the harmonised use and interpretation of the standard
- defined maximum dust reference values;
- a uniform testing protocol for these dust reference values;

- recommendations for safe use labelling of treated seed and information to be supplied to users.

Certified treatment facilities will be granted a license to make use of the ESTA logo on the seed treated in their facilities. This logo shall not only document that the treatment process and resulting seed are of a certain quality; in combination with the safe use labelling advice it shall also help to facilitate the free movement of treated seed throughout the European Union.

“The seed sector is serious in its commitment to assure high quality treated seed that is safe for users, safe for the environment and that supplies Europe’s farmers and growers with the best available crop protection at minimum dosages of chemicals.”, von Essen underlines and points to the significant related investments of the industry. “Next to the development of the protocols, the costs for the independent audits and certifications of facilities, we also invest in a lot in awareness raising, information, training and -of course- management.” For the latter, ESA is now starting a specific recruitment process for a dedicated ESTA Manager who shall promote the standard EU wide and assist companies in their respective preparations.

The industry has set itself ambitious targets: within the coming one to three years, it targets a nearly full market penetration throughout the European Union and plans to extend the scheme to further crops and all seed treatment applications.