



MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Seed Federation warns against unsolicited seed packages

24 August 2020 Canberra – CEO of the Australian Seed Federation (ASF), Mr Osman Mewett urges the public to contact the federal Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment in the event they receive unsolicited seed packages in the mail.

This follows media reports that individuals in different countries, including Australia, have received unsolicited seed packages of unknown origin.

“If you receive seed packages via the mail that you have not ordered, please report these to Australia’s biosecurity officials as soon as possible. You should only plant and use seed from known and trusted sources” said Mr Mewett.

Seed imported legally undergoes rigorous testing by seed companies to meet Australia’s strict biosecurity requirements before they are distributed through commercial channels to prevent or control plant pests that may affect seed quality, seed movement and result in the introduction of new pests into Australia.

Seeds of unknown origin pose a major threat to Australia’s biosecurity as they carry no guarantee of having undergone these important testing procedures and could lead to the introduction of different types of plant pests and invasive species to the environment including pests that have not previously been reported in Australia.

“Australian farmers and backyard vegetable growers expect quality seed and ensuring seed health is a very important topic for the Australian seed industry” said Mr Mewett. “To meet these customer expectations, seed companies focus on the prevention, detection and eradication of seed borne pathogens.”

“Healthy seeds, free from known seed borne diseases, are necessary for sustainable food production. Keeping seeds, and consequently plants, healthy is crucial to ensure a sustainable food supply, as well as to protect Australia’s environment and agricultural enterprises” concluded Mr Mewett.

To report a potential biosecurity breach visit awe.gov.au/report or 1800 798 636.

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About the Australian Seed Federation

The Australian Seed Federation (ASF) is the peak industry body for the Australian seed industry at the local, state, national and international level. The ASF also represents its members internationally, as a member of the International Seed Federation (ISF) and the Asia Pacific Seed Association (APSA).

The ASF strives to deliver *Sustainability, Leadership, Integrity and Collaboration* on key issues including climate change adaptation, world food security, technological developments, trade, and the growth in productivity of Australian and international agriculture, through the delivery and supply of new and improved commodities and services to the market.