



HEUBACH CODE OF PRACTICE

SEED TREATMENT

Modern seed treatment is one of the most focused chemical crop protection methods. It means that just a small amount of active substance can provide a high level of protection for a seedling against a wide variety of insect pests, as well as fungal and seed borne diseases.

However, during the processing, transportation and sowing of treated seeds dust contaminated with active substances can be mechanically abraded. Transportation of this abraded dust to adjacent non-target areas can have negative impacts, for example on non-target arthropods such as bees.

To address this issue, a gravimetric method has been created by a joint initiative of the pesticide and seed industry, under the auspices of the Seed Treatment Industry Stewardship Steering Committee (STISSC)¹. This method determines the quantity of floating dust particles of treated seeds generated under defined mechanical stress. It provides reproducible measurements of the seed treatment quality (Heubach test method)². This analysis should be performed under defined laboratory conditions (by a Heubach laboratory). Building on this Heubach method, the STISSC has also developed a certification scheme to harmonise and to validate the quality

level required of these Heubach laboratories (the Heubach Code of Practice, CoP).

Beyond the Heubach CoP scheme, a network of pesticide and seed industry companies have also developed quality assurance schemes for seed treatment facilities, e.g. SeedGuard and ESTA. Very important within these schemes are the dust specific criteria, alongside the treatment processes, equipment and facilities in the seed treatment sites.

To fulfil the dust specific criteria, which came into effect on 1 July 2017, certified treatment sites must address their dust analyses via an approved Heubach laboratory. Consequently, the success and validity of the certification of seed treatment sites depends on the status of the associated Heubach laboratories.

HEUBACH CODE OF PRACTICE CERTIFICATION

The Heubach CoP certification scheme sets specific requirements for the in-house laboratories of seed treatment plants, and external independent laboratories in Europe (the EU 27 member states plus Switzerland), who monitor the floating dust of treated seeds.

As a participant in the CoP scheme a Heubach laboratory will undergo the following test routines, which are

conducted and supervised by SGS, as the approved certification body on behalf of STISSC:

- a. Two onsite assessments (audits) within a three year cycle representing a first initial certification audit and one surveillance audit ensuring the ongoing conformity of facilities
- b. Annual random sample crosschecks, organised by the certification body
- c. Annual proficiency tests, organised by STISSC acknowledged provider

A Heubach-CoP certificate is granted to a qualifying Heubach laboratory upon successful participation in all of these assessments. In conclusion, the certification demonstrates the proven reliability of the lab, secures its credibility and highlights the competence of their dust monitoring services alongside all seed treatment processes.

CONTACT SGS

SGS Germany GmbH
Europa-Allee 12
D – 49685 Emstek
Germany

Phone: +49 4473 94 39 0

Email: seed.crop@sgs.com

¹ STISSC: The Seed Treatment Industry Stewardship Steering Committee as a working group open to seed treatment manufacturers, promoting the safe use of seed treatment products.

² The ESA reference method "Assessment of free floating dust and abrasion particles of treated seeds as a parameter of the quality of treated seeds" <http://esta.euroseeds.eu/Standard/TestMethod>