

## BUYING GOOD PLANTING MATERIALS

### Goal

- Get optimal yields for 25 years;
- Produce fruit bunches that contain a lot of oil;
- Get a maximum price for the fruit bunches and a good 'return' on fertiliser and labour.

### Standard

- Planting material is 100 percent *tenera*;
- All planting material is certified and comes from a good breeding company.

### Remarks

#### **It is illegal for smallholders in Indonesia to buy non-certified seeds!**

But:

- It is difficult for individual farmers to buy certified seeds. A land certificate is always required.
- The easiest way for farmers to buy certified seeds is by buying them as a group or cooperative.
- In Indonesia, PPKS give a discount for smallholder cooperatives buying seeds.

### Timing

When buying the seeds or seedlings.

### How

#### Buying the right seeds

Farmers who plant independently can make sure they buy the right seeds by following these key points:

- Buy seeds from a certified, reliable breeding company that can deliver the seeds directly to the farmer. **Never** use a 'middleman' or trader.
- Work together in cooperatives or farmers' groups when buying seeds.
- **Never** buy seeds or seedlings from anyone other than reputable companies. Bad palms will give bad yields for 25 years!
- Look for a company logo. Good companies such as PPKS now put their logo on each seed. If the logo is not there, the seed is fake! However, beware that there can also be fake seeds with fake logos - so the logo alone is still not enough.
- Ask to see a certificate. Reliable companies will always provide a certificate of authentication.

In Indonesia, PPKS in Medan produces good quality oil palm seeds that can be trusted [1]. They also have local offices in Kalimantan and Sumatra. For information, contact:

Pusat Penelitian Kelapa Sawit (PPKS)  
JL. Brigjen Katamso, No. 51  
Medan, North Sumatera, 20158  
Phone: +62 61 7862477  
Website: [www.iopri.org](http://www.iopri.org)



*A genuine seed from PPKS, pre-germinated and stamped with the name of the company.*



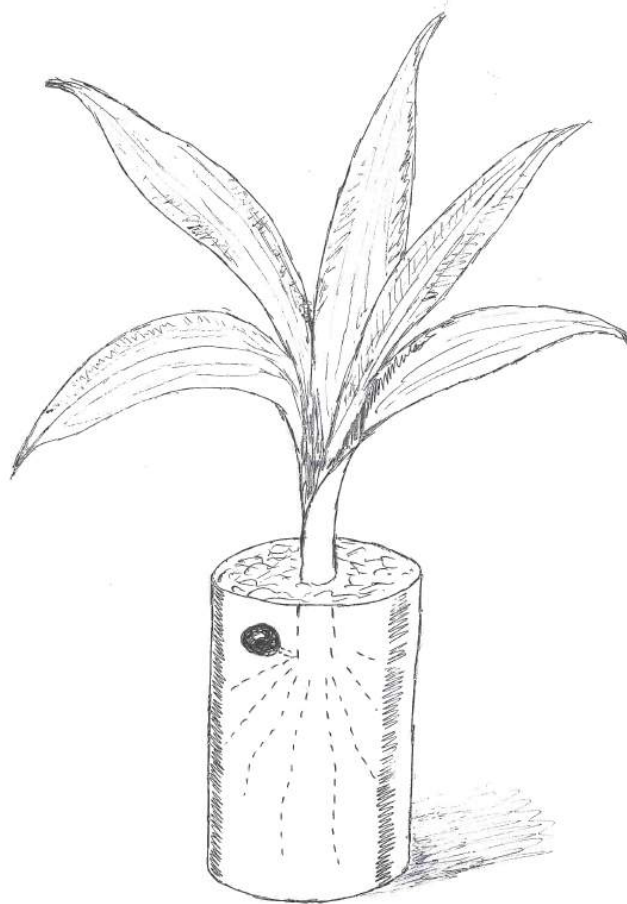
Genuine certificate from PPKS.

### Testing the quality of seeds and seedlings

It is impossible to know for certain from a seed or a seedling if the plant is *tenera*, *dura*, or *pisifera*, but we know that certified *tenera* hybrid seeds always come from a *dura* mother, so they are all of the *dura* type with a thick shell. The type of seed or seedling can be identified through the following steps:

- Step 1.** Select 20 seeds at random or collect 20 seeds from seedlings by carefully digging into the polybag to find the seed and then removing the seed without damaging the roots.
- Step 2.** Open all the seeds with a hammer and check if the shells are thick (*dura*) or thin (*tenera*):
  - If some of the shells are clearly thin, the seeds are fake, and all the seeds and seedlings should be thrown away!
  - If all shells are thick, the seedlings are all from *dura* mothers. This can mean two things: (i) the seeds are from a breeding company and will all become good *tenera* palms, or (ii) the seeds are from a seed trader who bought *dura* bunches that the mill did not want.

**Note:** This kind of check is not a good replacement for buying certified seeds. Some seed traders will buy *dura* bunches only, so planting seeds without a good certificate is always a big risk, even after testing them.



*Schematic drawing of the position of the seed in a polybag.*

## Data recording

It is important to record all activities carried out in the plantation. The table below gives an example.

Date	Time	Location	Activity	Input type	Input amount	Input costs	Labour input		Labour costs
							People	Hours	
16/01/13		Field 3	Buying seeds	PPKS seeds	150	1.5 million Rp			