



2012

## FAIR LABOR ASSOCIATION INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL MONITORING AGRICULTURAL REPORT

**COMPANY:** Syngenta  
**COUNTRY:** India  
**PROVINCE:** Karnataka  
**MONITOR:** Glocal Research Service  
**AUDIT DATE:** July 17 – 22, 2012  
**PRODUCTS:** Hybrid Corn Seeds  
**NUMBER OF WORKERS:** 74  
**NUMBER OF WORKERS INTERVIEWED:** 35  
**NUMBER OF FARMS VISITED:** 30  
**TOTAL AREA COVERED IN AUDIT:** 60 Acres  
**PROCESSES:** Detasseling

To view more about the FLA's work with Syngenta, please visit the FLA website [here](#).



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**Code Awareness:**

GEN.2 Ensure that all of the company's growers and seed organizers inform their workers about the workplace standards orally and by posting standards in a prominent place (in the local languages spoken by workers) and undertake other efforts to educate workers about the workplace standards on a regular basis.

**Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** Workers are not aware of the workplace standards and do not have complete awareness of the different elements of the code of conduct (COC).

- Plan Of Action:**
1. During preseason meetings, growers and family laborers will be educated about the company's workplace standards. Growers are to ensure they bring at least 1 non-family worker representative to the preseason meeting.
  2. The company is planning separate code awareness meetings in corn seed production locations. As seed coordinators already organize workers for the detassellation process as part of corn production, it is easy to organize separate meetings with the workers.
  3. The code of conduct (COC) will be communicated in all the villages through various communication materials like pamphlets; posters; snake and ladder games; and wall paintings.
  4. Syngenta's field team will be educated by Syngenta's CSR Team and will communicate the codes to workers during their regular farm visits.
  5. We will explore using more women mobilizers, who will meet workers on individual farms and communicate the message.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

**Code Awareness: Other**

Other (Company Internal Grievance Policy and Procedures)

**Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** Growers and workers are not aware of the company's policy on workers' grievances.

**Plan Of Action:**

1. Syngenta has developed a grievance policy for workers.
2. The grievance policy is communicated through preseason meetings, trainings, and campaigns for both workers and growers.
3. We have developed various informational, educational, and communication (IEC) materials, such as pamphlets, wall paintings, and posters to disseminate the message.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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### **Child Labor: Proof of Age Documentation**

CL.3 Company will assist growers in maintaining proof of age documentation for all young workers on the farm and growers are recommended to maintain proof of age documentation for all workers in the farm, including long term and casual workers.

#### **Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** None of the farms visited maintained any age proof verification documents for young workers.

**Plan Of Action:**

1. During awareness meetings, growers will be educated and motivated on: a) managing young workers, b) the legal requirements to be met for engaging them, and c) the requirement of maintaining records on the farms.
2. Birth certificates, school certificates, ration cards, medical certificates, birth records issued by the local government, etc., are accepted as age proof documentation. A copy of any one of the records mentioned above will kept on the farms.
3. The company is planning to distribute a documentation kit to all growers. The kits will include the age verification procedure and will be maintained by growers.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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### Child Labor: Other Means of Age Verification

CL.4 In those cases where proof of age documentation is not readily available or unreliable, growers will take precautions to ensure that all workers are at least the minimum working age, including viewing medical or religious records, school records or other means considered reliable in the local context.

#### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** For age verification, school and medical records are considered reliable, but none of the farms maintain such records.

**Plan Of Action:**

1. During awareness meetings, growers will be educated and motivated on the requirement of maintaining records on the farms.
2. Birth certificates, school certificates, ration cards, medical certificates, local government birth records, etc., are accepted as age proof; therefore, a copy of any one of these records can be kept on the farms.
3. The company is planning to distribute a documentation kit to all growers The kits will include the age verification procedure and will be maintained by growers.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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**Child Labor: Education of Young Workers**

CL.8 Growers shall ensure that when young workers are employed, their education is not jeopardized.

**Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** None of the young workers interviewed were presently attending school.

- Plan Of Action:**
1. Syngenta will sensitize growers and workers to the importance of educating children and young workers during grower awareness campaigns.
  2. During the farm visit, Syngenta’s field team will motivate these young workers to continue their education.
  3. Syngenta will consult local organizations and educational institutions and help these young workers be re-admitted to schools/colleges.
  4. Every year, Syngenta celebrates events in schools/colleges and conducts different cultural activities and competitions for the children to motivate them.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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**Harassment or Abuse: Grievance Procedure**

H&A.12 The company shall have in place grievance procedures that first allow an attempt to settle grievances directly between the worker and the grower, but, where this is inappropriate or has failed, it is possible for the worker to have the grievance considered at one or more steps, depending on the nature of the grievance and the enterprise’s structure and size. The company shall ensure that workers know the grievance procedures and its applicable rules.

**Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** Workers are not aware of the company’s grievance policy and procedures.

- Plan Of Action:**
1. Syngenta has developed a grievance policy for growers and workers.
  2. During preseason meetings, growers and workers will be informed of this; there will be separate code awareness meetings with workers.
  3. Various IEC materials, such as pamphlets, posters, wall paintings, and mechanisms like communicating through women mobilizers and field supervisors will also be used to address this issue.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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**Non-Discrimination: General Compliance Non-Discrimination**

D.1 Growers shall comply with all local laws, regulations, and procedures concerning non-discrimination.

**Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** The procedures and regulations concerning the non-discrimination of workers in both wage payment and work allocation as per local law are not completely followed.

**Plan Of Action:** During preseason meetings and awareness campaigns, the company is educating both growers and workers on the local laws related to non-discrimination. In the long run, we are planning to address this issue during local stakeholder consultations.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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## Non-Discrimination: Employment Decisions

D.2 All employment decisions shall be made solely on the basis of a person's qualifications, in terms of education, training, experience, and demonstrated skills and/or abilities, as they relate to the inherent requirements of a particular job.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** Gender and age discrimination in wages and work allocation were widely prevalent in all of the farms visited. It is to be noted that: a) the division of labor along gender lines and b) paying male and female different wages for joint activities are common practices in this region and were observed in all crops.

**Plan Of Action:** In the long run, we are planning to address this issue during local stakeholder consultations.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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### **Non-Discrimination: Sex-Based Wage Discrimination**

D.3 There shall be no differences in remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value. Remuneration (wages, compensation) includes the basic minimum or prevailing industry wage and any additional payments to be made directly or indirectly, whether in cash or in kind, by grower to workers and arising out of the workers' employment. Such additional payments include wage differentials or increments based on seniority or marital status, cost of living allowances, housing or residential allowances, family allowances, benefits in-kind, such as the allotment and cleaning of work clothes or provision of fire wood, spices, raw material for food, equipment, and other benefits.

#### **Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** The daily wage rates for ploughing and pesticide application, tasks that are exclusively done by male workers, varied from Rs 150 – 250 across the sample farms. In contrast, the daily wage rates for weeding, sowing, and harvesting, tasks that are mostly done by female workers, varied from Rs 80 – 125. Wage differences also exist in activities in which both male and female workers perform jointly. For instance in detasseling work, wages vary from Rs 120 – 150, with female workers receiving a lower wage than male workers.

**Plan Of Action:** The company has been working with local stakeholders to formulate a strategy to address this issue.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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**Health and Safety: General Compliance Health and Safety**

H&S.1 Growers shall comply with all local laws, regulations, and procedures concerning health and safety. In any case where local laws and the Workplace Code of Conduct are contradictory, the higher standards will apply. Growers will possess all legally required permits.

**Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** Local law stipulates that employers provide training, personal protective equipment (PPE), and health checkups to workers who handle chemical pesticides. This is not followed.

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta has developed a comprehensive health and safety management system. The details of the policy/system have been explained in the best (seed production) practices document and in pamphlets, which are distributed among workers.

Actions:

1. Continuously, the company is organizing separate training programs for growers and workers on the safe handling of chemicals with the support of Syngenta’s Crop Protection Team.
2. We have developed different communication tools, which explain the guidelines and procedures, like documents explaining related Do’s and Don’ts. Syngenta’s field team also educated workers during their field visit.
3. Syngenta initiated conducting health camps and first aid training with the help of local organizations, such as the Indian Red Cross Society and St. Ambulance Associations.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

### Health and Safety: Health and Safety Management System

H&S.4 The health and safety policy shall contain the framework for a comprehensive health and safety management system, within which growers' responsibilities; workers' rights and duties; various responsibilities of designated personnel; procedures that enable workers to raise health and safety concerns; and procedures for reporting death, injury, illness, and other health and safety issues (e.g., near-miss accidents) are clear, regularly tested, and regularly reviewed.

#### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The policy does not clearly specify comprehensive health and safety management systems.

**Plan Of Action:** 1. Syngenta has developed a comprehensive health and safety management system. The details of the policy/system have been explained in the best seed production practices document and in pamphlets, which are distributed among workers.

2. It is planned to educate growers and workers about this policy.

3. Distribute IEC material regarding relative Do's and Don'ts to growers and workers.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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### Health and Safety: Communication to Workers

H&S.5 The health and safety policy shall be communicated to all workers in the local language or language(s) spoken by workers if different from the local language.

#### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** Hired workers have not received any communication regarding the company's health and safety policy.

**Plan Of Action:** 1. The company will conduct farm level/village level awareness sessions for workers, where they will explain the health and safety policy to them.

2. Syngenta has planned to create wall paintings in villages and paste posters at key places in its production villages.

3. The company will distribute the pamphlets to explain the H&S Policy and the Do's and Dont's related to handling chemicals.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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## Health and Safety: Access to Safety Equipment and First Aid

H&S.6 The company should ensure that growers and workers have access to safety equipment and first aid.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** First aid boxes are not being maintained on the farms.

**Plan Of Action:** At present, the company provides a few first aid boxes; they are to be kept at important production villages for the use of farmers.

#### Actions:

1. Growers will be effectively trained in first aid and will be encouraged to keep first aid boxes on their own.
2. The company will ensure that there are first aid boxes.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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## Health and Safety: Personal Protective Equipment

H&S.7 All necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, eye protection, respiratory protection, etc., should be made available to relevant workers to prevent unsafe exposure (inhalation or contact with solvent vapors, dust, etc.) to health and safety hazards.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The company has not distributed PPE to corn growers in this area. The workers who handle chemicals do not take the proper precautions while spraying pesticides.

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta will ensure that growers make sure that workers have the necessary PPE, which includes: a covering apron, a mask, hand gloves, and goggles, to prevent unsafe exposure. This will be re-enforced during the preseason meetings.

Syngenta developed a new PPE design, which safely covers the whole body and is more comfortable to use. It is initially planned to provide this to 20% of growers; it will be slowly extended to all growers. A 25:75 strategy is planned, which shares the cost of PPE between Syngenta and growers. This will help build grower ownership regarding PPE and they will make use of it properly. The company has already started distributing the PPE kits.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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### Health and Safety: Chemical Management and Training

H&S.8 All chemicals and hazardous substances, farm produce, and raw materials should be properly labeled and stored. Growers shall not use any banned (either by national or international laws) pesticides, fertilizers, or any other agro chemicals on the farm. The grower shall ensure the safe disposal of waste chemicals or empty containers of chemicals/packing materials. Growers/organizer/company will provide the necessary training to workers regarding the handling of agro chemicals (pesticides, fertilizers, and other hazardous substances), their application, and the use of personal protective equipment.

#### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** All of the interviewed workers and most farmers reported not having received any training by the company on health and safety. The company has just conducted village level code awareness programs in some villages; no proper training programs on health and safety have yet been conducted.

**Plan Of Action:** Due to the short duration of the crop in the field, the company is in the process of implementing the activities phasewise. In the coming season, the company is planning to organize health and safety trainings (which include safe chemical handling, machinery maintenance, and first aid trainings) for growers and workers.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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### **Health and Safety: Machinery Maintenance and Worker Training**

H&S.11 All production machinery, equipment, and tools shall be regularly maintained and properly guarded. Workers shall receive training on the proper use and safe operation of the machinery, equipment, and tools that they use.

#### **Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** Workers have not received any training on the proper use and safe operation of machinery and equipment.

**Plan Of Action:** The FLA program is new in field crops and the company is in the process of setting all of these systems in place. In the coming season, the company is planning to organize health and safety trainings (which include safe chemical handling, machinery maintenance, and first aid trainings) for growers and workers.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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## Hours of Work: General Compliance Hours of Work

HOW.1 Growers shall comply with all local laws, regulations, and procedures concerning hours of work, public holidays, and leave.

### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** The procedures and regulations concerning hours of work, public holidays, and overtime compensation as per local law are not followed. Neither workers nor growers are aware of the local law.

**Plan Of Action:** For corn crops, detasseling work is done 3 times over a period of 2 – 3 days; workers are paid on a daily basis. Workers will be hired on an as-needed basis and not hired daily. Syngenta will educate growers and workers on these aspects.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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### Hours of Work: Rest Day

HOW.2 Workers shall be entitled to at least one day off in every seven-day period. In case workers have to work for several days without a day off due to the requirement of the production cycle, they can do so as far as they voluntarily agree to it.

#### Noncompliance

**Explanation:** Workers are engaged via seasonal contracts and are provided neither paid rest days nor weekends off.

**Plan Of Action:** For corn crops, detasseling work is done 3 times over a period of 2 – 3 days; workers are paid on a daily basis. Workers will be hired on an as-needed basis and not hired daily.

#### Actions:

1. Syngenta has been educating growers on this topic and also on maintaining proper records.

2. Syngenta is encouraging growers to have written employment contracts with seasonal workers, which specify paid days, rest days, and weekly time off.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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## **Wages, Benefits and Overtime Compensation: General Compliance Wages, Benefits and Overtime Compensation**

WBOT.1 Growers shall comply with all local laws, regulations and procedures concerning the payment of wages and benefits, including overtime compensation. In any case where laws and the FLA Workplace Code of Conduct are contradictory, the standard that provides the greatest protection for workers shall apply. Where provisions are lacking, growers shall take measures to reasonably accommodate matters concerning the payments of wages and benefits, including overtime compensation.

### **Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** [The procedures and regulations concerning wages, benefits, and overtime compensation as per local law are not followed.](#)

**Plan Of Action:** [During preseason meetings and using wall paintings, Syngenta is creating awareness about minimum wages and overtime payments among growers and workers.](#)

**Deadline Date:** [May 2013](#)

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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**Wages, Benefits and Overtime Compensation: Minimum Wage**

WBOT.2 Growers shall pay workers, the legal minimum wage or the prevailing regional wage, whichever is higher.

**Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** The wages paid for certain operations are below the legal minimum wage. The minimum daily wage prescribed for agricultural labor as per the local law is Rs 145. For certain tasks, like transplantation, weeding, detasseling, and harvesting, which are carried out mostly by female workers, workers are paid Rs 100 – 125, which is less than the legal minimum wage.

**Plan Of Action:** During preseason meetings, Syngenta is creating awareness about minimum wages and overtime payments among growers and workers.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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**Wages, Benefits and Overtime Compensation: Worker Wage Awareness**

WBOT.6 Growers/Organizer/Company will make an effort to educate workers so that the terms of employment and terms regarding wages, benefits, and deductions shall be clearly understood and acceptable by workers.

**Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** Workers are not aware of the wages and benefits they are entitled to as per local law.

**Plan Of Action:** Syngenta is creating awareness about minimum wages and overtime payments among growers and workers by wall paintings, pamphlets, campaigns, etc.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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**Wages, Benefits and Overtime Compensation: Record Maintenance**

WBOT.7 The company shall make efforts to educate and assist growers in maintaining records of wages provided to workers in cash or in-kind or both, such records shall be acknowledged by workers.

**Noncompliance**

**Explanation:** Growers maintain no pay records.

**Plan Of Action:** 1. A documentation kit consisting of: seed production policy document; a copy of the contract between growers and vendors; health and safety Do's and Don'ts; local agriculture labor laws on hours of work, overtime, and minimum wages; grievance procedure with telephone number; and attendance sheet/wage register for workers will be supplied to all growers to maintain the records. Field supervisors will support illiterate farmers by training their children and their literate workers to maintain the documentation kits.

2. Syngenta will closely monitor wages with the documentation kits and data collected through internal monitoring visits by field staff.

**Deadline Date:** May 2013

**Action Taken:**

**Plan Complete:**

**Plan Complete Date:**

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