

## Why are sensitive areas vital for seed production and plant breeding?

Clean and healthy seeds are prerequisites for a healthy crop and consequently they are the starting point for sustainable agriculture.

Seed production and plant breeding in the EU often take place in **sensitive areas** due to a unique combination of factors that are essential for breeding and seed production, such as **soil fertility, climate conditions, access to water**, etc. which cannot easily be found elsewhere.



## Why are sensitive areas selected for breeders' activity?

Operating within sensitive areas is necessary to maintain the capacity for breeding and seed production as many of these areas naturally meet the required conditions, like pest free areas.

Regulations often require seed production areas to be free from **pests, diseases, weed seeds**, etc. resulting in specific locations, such as windy coastal areas for seed potato production.

Distance criteria need to be considered in plant breeding and seed production, to avoid mixing / impurity of seed lots by unwanted cross-pollination of plant varieties. Consequently due to distance requirements it is not possible to find new areas with sufficient distance to existing seed production lots.

## The 'SUR effect' in statistics:



In France, approximately **325,000 hectares** of seed production are located in sensitive areas, accounting for

**85%** of French seed production areas

&

**1.5%** of the total sensitive area



In Germany, the average impact on breeding nursery area is around

**36%** potentially forcing individual companies and breeding stations out of business.

Exemptions from plant protection product bans would be required for approximately

**90,000 ha** of seed production/multiplication area

REPRESENTING

**0.8%** OF THE AGRONOMIC AREA.



The impact on seed production and plant breeding is expected to vary across different crops and EU Member States, with potential reductions ranging from

**40% to 90%** IN SOME CASES.

The proposed restrictions will also affect seed companies operating in France and Germany but originating from other EU Member States.

## How to prevent SUR unintended impact on plant breeding and seed production

Providing healthy seeds and resistant varieties can significantly reduce the use of plant protection products during agricultural production, as required by the SUR objectives.

The impact of the proposal on sensitive areas may include **the closure of breeding stations, termination of breeding activities, or relocation of seed production outside the EU**, negatively impacting the European seed

business, small holder farmers, and leading to increased pesticide use in the agricultural production.

This is why, **an exemption for plant breeding and seed production** is necessary to minimize the economic and agricultural consequences, as only a small area requires exemption for a significant effect, and to achieve the reduction targets as set in the SUR.

