



Standing Committee Report Summary

Production and Availability of Pesticides

- The Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers submitted its report on the production and availability of pesticides on August 6, 2013. The Committee examined the availability of safe and effective pesticides and their judicious use by the farming community in order to ensure a sustained increase in agricultural production. It made the following recommendations:
- **Need for legislation on pesticides:** The Pesticides Management Bill replacing the Insecticides Act, 1968 has been pending in the Rajya Sabha since October 2008. The Committee was concerned about the long delay in considering the Bill. It recommended that the Departments of Chemicals and Petrochemicals (DCPC) and Agriculture (DAC) coordinate with the concerned authorities to bring out a comprehensive legislation to govern all issues relating to pesticides
- **Mechanism to assess demand and availability of pesticides:** The Committee noted changing trends with respect to the type of fertilisers consumed in the country as well as inter-state disparities in the consumption of fertilisers. It noted a positive trend in that the consumption of chemical pesticides has declined by a third from 75,033 metric tonnes (MT) in 1990-91 to 50,583 MT in 2011-12, while the use of bio-pesticides has increased manifold from 123 MT in 1994-95 to 8,110 MT in 2011-12.
- The Committee also noted wide inter-state disparities in the consumption of pesticides. While states like Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra recorded high consumption during 2011-12, states like Jharkhand and Odisha recorded very low consumption during the same period. It recommended devising an effective mechanism to assess the demand and availability of pesticides in states to ensure that accurate and complete data is available with both departments.
- **Mechanism to regulate prices of pesticides:** The Committee noted that the Insecticides Act contains significant provisions which facilitate the registration of a large number of pesticides manufacturers and formulators, thereby enhancing competition in production and prices. However, there is no Act or legal provision for controlling the price of pesticides. DCPC should put in place a mechanism to regulate and monitor the prices of pesticides to enable them to supply the same to farmers at affordable prices.
- **Pesticide testing laboratories:** DCPC admitted that a large scale usage of spurious pesticides is an issue of concern, which is a result of an inadequate number of accredited pesticides testing laboratories. The Committee found that there are a total of 71 laboratories in the country, with some states like Jharkhand and Meghalaya having no facility at all. It recommended that the Department initiate appropriate action to establish well equipped pesticides testing laboratories in adequate numbers in each state across the country.
- **Mandatory requirement for checking spurious pesticides:** The Committee observed that it was not mandatory to check pesticides for spurious content at the factory level. This has resulted in large samples of spurious pesticides found in the market when farmers complained about them. The Committee recommended that the government create a mechanism to make testing of pesticides mandatory at every level right from the factory till the farmers. Adequate funds should also be provided to create an adequate number of testing laboratories and train inspectors. An authority similar to the Drug Controller General of India should also be constituted to monitor the manufacturing practices of pesticides across the country including in the private sector. 1951.

DISCLAIMER: This document is being furnished to you for your information. You may choose to reproduce or redistribute this report for non-commercial purposes in part or in full to any other person with due acknowledgement of PRS Legislative Research ("PRS"). The opinions expressed herein are entirely those of the author(s). PRS makes every effort to use reliable and comprehensive information, but PRS does not represent that the contents of the report are accurate or complete. PRS is an independent, not-for-profit group. This document has been prepared without regard to the objectives or opinions of those who may receive it.