

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1084  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020**

**USE OF PESTICIDES-CHEMICALS IN PRODUCTION OF FOODGRAIN**

**1084. SHRIMATI KESHARI DEVI PATEL:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken note of people falling ill due to excessive use of pesticides-chemicals in production of foodgrain and other items and if so, details thereof;
- (b) the steps taken to check adulteration and limit the use of pesticides in view of the health hazards;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to take stern action in order to check adulteration in food, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has initiated any programme to create awareness among public regarding the method employed to identify such adulteration in food and mitigate its ill effects;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the steps being taken by the Government to explore alternative methods and technology for replacing use of chemicals in foodgrains?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND  
FAMILY WELFARE  
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a) and (b):Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has informed that they are not in receipt of any such report of people falling ill due to excessive use of pesticides-chemicals in production of foodgrain and other items. Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare is implementing 'Sub-Mission on Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine' Scheme, under which Integrated Pest Management approach is being promoted to educate the farmers about judicious use of chemical pesticides and to recommend use as per the directions prescribed on the label and leaflets. Integrated Pest Management seeks to promote cultural, mechanical, biological methods of pest control and orients the farmers about proper use of pesticides.

During the last 5 years (2015-16 to 2019-20), 3472 Farmer Field Schools and 647 Human Resource Development programmes were conducted under Integrated Pest Management and 1,04,160 farmers and 25,880 pesticide dealers and State Extension officials have been trained. Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW) is

implementing a scheme titled “Monitoring of Pesticide Residues at National Level” to determine the levels of pesticide residues in agriculture commodities. Under the scheme, the samples of vegetables, fruits, spices, red chilli powder, curry leaves, rice, wheat, pulses, tea and milk are collected by 33 participating laboratories from the retail outlets, mother dairy and Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) markets, farm gate, organic outlets located at different parts of the country and analysed by 30 National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accredited participating laboratories for the possible presence of pesticide residues. During the last 6 years (2014–15 to 2019–20), a total of 1,48,726 samples were analyzed and out of which 3908 (2.6%) samples were found above the Maximum Residue Limit. Reports of Pesticide Residue Analysis are shared with State Governments to undertake awareness campaigns and organise Farmer Field Schools in the districts where samples are above prescribed pesticide residues limit to educate farmers regarding the uses as per approved labels and leaflets.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has informed that farming operations do not come under the purview of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. However, FSSAI has fixed Maximum Residue Limits (MRL)/tolerance limits for various pesticides and antibiotics in food commodities under Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011 and these are reviewed from time to time. MRLs/tolerance limits are established on the basis of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Good Animal Husbandry Practices (GAHPs), Good Animal Feeding Practices (GAFPs) etc. FSSAI has also advised Food Safety Commissioners of States/UTs to carry out targeted special enforcement drive for monitoring of pesticide residues in food products.

(c): Implementation and enforcement of Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006, Rules and Regulations made thereunder primarily lies with State/UT Governments. To ensure the availability of safe food products to the consumers and for keeping a check on presence of pesticides/antibiotic residues more than the prescribed limits, Food Safety Commissioners of States/UTs have been advised from time to time to keep a strict vigil by regularly drawing food samples from all sources viz. manufacturers, wholesalers, Mandis and retailers and to take strict action against the offenders under the provisions of FSS Act, 2006. In cases where samples are found to be non-conforming to the prescribed norms and standards, penal action is initiated against the defaulting Food Business Operators (FBOs) as per provisions of FSS Act, 2006.

(d) & (e) : FSSAI has taken a series of steps to create awareness among public regarding identification of adulteration and mitigate its ill effects, including:

- Mobile testing labs, called Food Safety on Wheels (FSWs), which are used for testing, training and awareness generation. 90 FSWs have been provided to the States/UTs so far for being deployed in remote areas.
- Food Safety Magic Box, which is a portable testing kit, is useful as a pedagogical tool for school children, in primary health centres, for frontline health workers etc. A total of 102 very simple tests to determine adulteration can be performed with the Magic box. It is

available at Government e-market place. Its companion booklet is available on FSSAI website.

- Detect Adulterants with Rapid Testing (DART) is a booklet having compilation of common quick tests that consumers can conduct themselves at home to detect common food adulterants using water and simple solutions like tincture of iodine. It covers more than 50 quick tests.
- Consumer guidance notes have been published on diverse topics ranging from safety and quality of milk, concerns about pesticides in food, stickers on fruits and vegetables, formalin in fish etc. and circulated through social media as well as through its website. Guidance note on pesticides in food covers topics such as steps for personal protection from pesticide residues through food chain; safe use practices to reduce/eliminate pesticide residues; methods to reduce the pesticide residues from the food products etc. Various booklets and guidance notes are available on website of FSSAI and can be freely downloaded.
- FSSAI has also asked State Food Safety Commissioners to undertake awareness campaign on pesticides/insecticides residues in fruits and vegetables.
- Documentary films on detecting adulteration in milk and milk products, pepper, pulses etc. have been developed and are available on FSSAI's YouTube channel. Website and Facebook page of FSSAI contains information on methods of checking adulteration at home, pictures showing good cooking practices etc.

(f): Organic food is an alternative way of producing food without use of chemicals and pesticides. On its part, to ensure availability of genuine organic products to consumers, FSSAI has notified Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017 which stipulates that organic food offered or promoted for sale shall comply with the provisos of one of the systems namely Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India) implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare or National programme for Organic Production (NPOP) implemented by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. As per the regulations, a product may carry a certification or quality assurance mark of one of the systems mentioned above in addition to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's organic logo viz. Jaivik Bharat logo. These regulations are available at [www.fssai.gov.in](http://www.fssai.gov.in).