

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3589
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH AUGUST 2021

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF RESTRICTED PESTICIDES

†3589. SHRI DILESHWAR KAMAIT:
DR. RAMAPATI RAM TRIPATHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि और किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of certain restricted/banned pesticides used for production of other crops including fruits, vegetables, foodgrains, pulses etc. are being used for artificial ripening of fruits which causes adverse effect on human health, soil and livestock;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any investigation regarding complaints of presence of harmful chemicals in food items or has conducted any study to identify the level of harmful chemicals/pesticides residues in fruits, vegetables, crops and other food items and if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to restrict/prevent the use of harmful materials/chemicals/pesticides in the country particularly in food items?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि और किसान कल्याण मंत्री (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) and (b): The Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) has informed that artificial ripening of fruits using Carbide gas is prohibited under Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011. However, ripening of fruits is allowed by using Ethylene gas under Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Second Regulations, 2016. In order to ensure compliance to the prescribed standards and ensure availability of safe food products to the consumers, food safety officials of States / UTs regularly draw food samples from all sources viz. manufacturers, wholesalers, Mandis and retailers. In cases where samples are found to be non-conforming to the provisions of Food Safety and

Standards Act, 2006 and rules and regulations made thereunder, penal action is taken against the concerned persons under those provisions. The FSSAI has not reported instances of use of banned pesticides / chemicals for ripening of fruits.

(c) The FSSAI has further informed that it has fixed the Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for various pesticides, antibiotics, etc in food commodities under Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011, which are reviewed from time to time. Further, under a central sector scheme, namely, "Monitoring of Pesticide Residues at National Level", samples of vegetables, fruits and other crops are collected from the retail outlets, markets, farm gate etc. and analyzed for pesticide residues. From the analysis of a total of 1,72,437 samples of various food commodities during April, 2014 to March, 2021, residues were found exceeding above MRLs in 4,680 (2.7 %) samples. Reports of such instances were shared with concerned State Governments to take appropriate legal and corrective actions as per the provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968.

(d) The FSSAI has informed that washing and processing of vegetables and fruits help in removal of residues of pesticides / insecticides etc to a large extent. Consumers are educated through various communication platforms, print and outdoor media campaigns, social media, education booklets, stalls at fairs / events and mass awareness campaigns, etc about the importance of washing fruits and vegetables before consumption to avoid harmful effects of pesticides.

Further, to check overuse of pesticides in food crops, Government promotes Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach as an ecologically desirable alternative. Judicious use of chemical pesticides is recommended as a measure of last resort. The States' agriculture extension departments and 35 Central Integrated Pest Management Centres (CIPMCs) across the country train farmers, extension functionaries etc. The training activities include programmes on non-chemical pest management strategies and use of bio-pesticides to farmers through Farmers' Field Schools (FFSs), to master trainers, extension workers and short duration courses for pesticides dealers/NGOs/Graduates/Post-graduates/Pvt. Entrepreneurs and progressive farmers.

Pesticides are toxic substances but they do not pose any adverse effect on the environment if they are used as per the label and leaflet approved by the Registration Committee. Registered pesticides are periodically reviewed from time to time with regard to their safety and efficacy in consultation with experts on receipt of new studies / reports / references / information. So far, Government has banned or phased out 46 pesticides and 4 pesticide formulations for import, manufacture or sale in the country. In addition, 5 banned pesticides are allowed to be manufactured for export only, 8 pesticide registrations have been withdrawn and 9 pesticides have been placed under restricted use.
