



Safe use of Agricultural Pesticides

Pesticide, given its intrinsic properties to kill pests, is toxic in nature. It must not be regarded as a panacea for all pest problems but should only be used in a judicious manner. AFCD recommends the adoption of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach, which is sensitive to both human health and the environment. Such approach can also reduce the use of pesticides and prevent the development of resistance.

The essential components of IPM generally include the followings:

- n Selection and rotation of suitable kinds and varieties of crops
- n Identification, monitoring and assessment of pest problems
- n Good field sanitation
- n Integration of physical, biological and chemical control
- n Record keeping system

When pesticides are indeed needed for crop protection, you must always handle them safely and responsibly. Some general safety guidelines are listed below for pesticide users to follow:

Preparation

- Select suitable pesticides for the crops and pests concerned.
- Only purchase registered pesticides which are properly labelled and packaged.
- Always read and follow label instructions. In particular, pay close attention to the dilution and application rate, special precautions on safety, pre-harvest interval, phytotoxicity, compatibility etc.
- Use proper measuring cylinders which are reserved for use with pesticides. These must be washed thoroughly after use.
- Measure carefully and mix only the amount needed for the current job.

- Only mix pesticides in a well-ventilated location. Use a stick to stir the mixture. Do not use bare hands.

Equipment

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as specified on the label. (e.g. overalls, rubber gloves, boots, face mask, goggles etc.) when mixing and applying pesticides.
- Use separate, clearly marked sprayers for insecticides and herbicides.
- Provide proper calibration, maintenance and regular checking of leakages from joints/ pipes and worn or blocked nozzles (uneven spray pattern)
- After using the sprayer:
 - empty any residue through nozzle, do not blow out a clogged nozzle with your mouth
 - fill and rinse tank with clean water, flushing some through nozzle
 - repeat, drain tank and nozzles completely
 - store in a dry place with lid open
- If a motorized sprayer is not going to be used within the next 48 hours, drain fuel tank and carburetor and leave empty.

Field application

- Pregnant or sensitized persons should not apply pesticides.
- Post warning notices (e.g. Poison, no-entry, name of pesticide, date and time of application, etc) at conspicuous locations.
- Do not smoke, eat or drink when spraying.
- Do not spray
 - when crops are wet from rain or dew
 - in a strong wind
 - if you expect rain to fall within the next few hours
 - when flowers are in bloom
- Keep to windward when spraying.
- Beware of spray drift, do not inhale the mist. Avoid contact with mouth, eyes, skin and clothing.
- Stop spraying immediately if you are feeling ill. Bring along the label when seeking medical attention.

- Avoid drift and contamination of non-target objects
- Avoid getting pesticides on you. Keep a bucket of water and soap handy when you spray -- if you splash yourself with pesticide, wash immediately.
- If you are left with a small quantity of spray, spray it evenly over the treated area.
- Unless otherwise directed by label, do not harvest crops for at least two weeks after the last treatment.
- Wash thoroughly with soap and water after handling or using pesticides. Wash clothing worn for pesticide applications after each application and separately from other laundry.
- Triple rinse empty container and wash mixing stick thoroughly, then dispose of the container as standard municipal waste.
- Collect rinsing and spray it evenly over the treated area. Do not contaminate water source.

Storage and disposal

- Purchase and keep only the amount of pesticide required for operational needs
- If it is necessary to store pesticides, always store them under lock and key in their original, labeled container. Make sure all containers are tightly closed. Store pesticides away from food, feed and out of reach of children and livestock animals.
- Do not use the empty container for other purposes.
- Dispose obsolete or unwanted pesticides properly in accordance with requirements laid down in the Waste Disposal Ordinance.

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