



PRESS RELEASE



Adopting scientific farming practices for whitefly management in cotton in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan Multi stakeholders Meeting

- **Govt. machinery, policy makers, scientific community, state agriculture universities and industry adopts mitigation strategies to control white fly infestation in other states**

2 March 2016 , New Delhi : An interactive stakeholder meeting of ICAR, State Agricultural Universities (PAU, HAU, RAU), CICR, Ministry of Agriculture, scientists, agrochemical industry associations led by CropLife India, state government representatives, department of agriculture and the farming community met to deliberate effective management of white fly pest attacks in the cotton crop in multiple states. Dr J.S. Sandhu DDG (Crop Science), ICAR, in his introductory remark mentioned that, “It is indeed important for the scientific community, government and industry stakeholders to get together find out the scientific options available or to develop a strategy for effective management of whitefly in northern India, to avoid repetition of such incidents repeated in the other parts of the country where cotton is grown, while deliberating on the development of scientific options to effectively manage future pest attacks.”

Dr T. Mohapatra, Secretary DARE and DG ICAR said. “This devastating pest attack has affected the incomes of several farmers especially in the Malwa Region of Punjab, wherein more than 4.5 Lakh Hectares were under cotton crop this year. Hence it is important that the group finds out a way to eradicate this menace.”

In his key note address Dr. A. Rami Horowitz, Agricultural Research organization Israel, spoke about the insect pest management with special reference to whitefly management at a global perspective.

Several cases have been reported by the State Agriculture Department including improper spraying of pesticides, late sowing, and inclement weather with heavy rains in June followed by dry spell in July last year, which led to a high level of infestation of white fly in northern cotton growing states.

Dr S.N. Sushil, Plant Protection Advisor (PPA), to the Ministry of Agriculture & farmer welfare, emphasized on need to curb the menace of spurious pesticides and seeds white promoting the need for using recommended pesticides only.

Dr SK Malhotra Commissioner Agriculture GOI reiterated the need to manage the whitefly in early stage of infestation and layout of frontline demonstration amongst farmers.

Mr. Sanjay Lohiya, Joint Secretary, called for a holistic approach to manage whitefly infestation from all avenues, while emphasizing the need to manage the cropping pattern rather than from a crop perspective.



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The Directors of Research from the various agricultural universities of Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana spoke about the mitigating strategies like timely sowing by farmers, choosing whitefly tolerant/ resistant seed varieties and hybrids to white curl virus, timely use of insecticide with recommended dosages, correct usage of nozzle size during spray application to farmers.

A broader consensus emerged from the interactive meeting which included the following recommendations:

- **Extension of training activities on white fly to farmers, dealers and farming community**
- **Advice on spurious and fake pesticides and seeds.**
- **Release of canal water for timely sowing of cotton seeds.**
- **Recommending only white fly tolerant or resistant varieties/hybrid seeds for sowing which is less susceptible.**
- **Use of recommended insecticides and pesticides to farmers**
- **Training to pesticide dealers on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in cotton and selling recommended insecticides ,**
- **To ensure farmers receive agronomic advisory from recommended persons.**
- **Change in application of pesticide spraying technology.**
- **Pesticides application technology training to farmers and field staff**
- **Shortlisting of hybrids /varieties for correct usage and pesticide container management**

Dr Rajvir Rathi, representing CropLife India, mentioned, during his vote of thanks, “While the industry empathizes with the crop losses faced in Punjab and Haryana, it is important that multiple stakeholders including Scientists, Agriculture Department, state government, Industry associations and any other relevant stakeholders should collaborate and discuss the future course of action to deal with such heavy pest infestations”.

Dr Y.P. Singh, Principal Scientist, (Commercial Crops) Crop Science Division, ICAR, during his closing remarks deliberated that “Observations and discussions focused on the aspect of scientific farming including Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and a risk mitigation plan to counter such infestations both during short and long terms, to manage whitefly in a sustainable manner”

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