

Press Release

Farmer deaths in Maharashtra – are pesticides responsible?

CropLife India urges Government for a detailed investigation

22nd November 2017, Maharashtra: Severity of recent fatalities in Yavatmal and adjoining areas attributed to the ‘wrong use of crop protection products’ needs serious in-depth investigation before any futuristic risk mitigation action plans could be evolved to avoid the repeat of the events in future anywhere in the country.

Considering that all Crop Protection products are registered in India after rigorous risk assessment on their safety aspects, nowhere else in the country such fatalities or adverse impact have been observed in the last few decades as was observed in the Yavatmal and adjoining areas during the last couple of months. While it is a fact that Crop Protection Chemicals are potentially hazardous to human beings or animals, if used without prescribed precautions, one wonders why despite farmers throughout the country, even in the remotest of villages, using such products to save their crops from the pest attacks, the deaths concentrated only to a particular region and not in the entire country. It is also surprising that mere inhalation or exposure to these products is not known to cause death until and unless it is ingested beyond a particular quantity.

CropLife India urges the Special Investigation Team (SIT) for a detailed case by case fact based scientific investigation to arrive at the exact cause(s). CropLife India and its members companies will extend any help required to aid the investigation and will utilize the learnings of the region for increasing the farmer’s safety and well-being throughout the country.

Highly disturbed, over the recent reports of the loss of lives in Maharashtra, **Mr. Brij Uberoi, CEO, CropLife India**, said “CropLife India and its responsible member companies regularly engage with farmers and other stakeholders in generating awareness and building capacity through its stewardship programs advocating Safe, Judicious and Need based use of Crop Protection Products, apart from spreading awareness among farmers about Spurious and Illegal Crop Protection Products, use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) while applying these products on crops and safe disposal of used containers”.

CropLife India, and its members, over the past many years have been working with the various central and state departments of agriculture on raising awareness about good crop protection practices, to minimize farmers’ losses caused due to biotic stresses on crops, in a sustainable manner. CropLife India members, regularly organize farmers’ training programs emphasizing the need safe and judicious use of crop protection chemicals with right time, dosage, spraying equipment and use of PPE during spraying. Its members have even been demonstrating the use of PPE kits in many parts of the country to raise awareness levels.

Brij Uberoi added that, “CropLife India urges SIT to make scientific evaluation based on facts and eagerly looks forward to the report to understand the Yavatmal episode better and . It looks forward to work with various State Agriculture Departments, to aid the cause of the farmers. On its own CropLife India and its members have further enhanced their campaign to address the

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issue in the affected parts of Maharashtra state by organizing various awareness campaign about safe and judicious use of Pesticides and distributing PPE, conducting Doctor training program and Medical health check-up camps in the affected areas. We would be working in close coordination with district and state authorities in Maharashtra (and elsewhere in the country) to have a short and long term solution to the issue". Also we urge the Central and State Government to ensure enforcement on use of PPE and judicious use by farmers.

CropLife India's endeavor has been to actively pursue Programs in various other States to raise awareness in the production of Safe Food & Responsible Use of Crop Protection Products and the same will continue, with a clear focus on improving farmers' income and enhancing their safety.

About Crop Life India:

CropLife India is an Association of Technology driven Crop Science Industry, committed to Advancing Sustainable Indian Agriculture. CropLife India promotes the benefits and responsible use of Crop Protection products, as well as sound regulatory frameworks in support of sustainable agriculture in India. CropLife India is part of CropLife International, a global federation of the plant science industry in over 90 countries. CropLife India believes in a strong and science-based regulatory system to protect people and the environment such that timely access to new crops, new Crop Protection Products or new uses for existing Crop Protection Products should be promoted.

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Grow Safe Food



**Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and
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