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- [K.N. Murali Sankar](#)

Excessive use of chemical pesticide by farmers is not only increasing the input cost for them, but also taking a toll on the soil health, which determines the crop yield and quality of produce, S.N. Sushil, Plant Protection Adviser to the Department of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage of the Ministry of Agriculture, has said.

Mr. Sushil spoke to *The Hindu* on the sideline of an interactive session with farmers held recently at Tatiparthi village where a pilot project on 'Responsive Use of Pesticides and Container Management' was launched by the Crop Life India, in association with the Ministry of Agriculture. Apart from Andhra Pradesh, the project is being implemented in another three States.

Farmers continue to use chemical pesticide in excess owing to lack of awareness, Mr. Sushil said, adding that it is high time ryots be educated on the use of pesticides and use of bio-pesticide should be promoted. "The use of bio-pesticide has increased from 123 metric tonnes to 6,000 metric tonnes per annum in the country in the last 20 years. But, at the same time, farmers are using 60,000 metric tonnes of chemical pesticide in a year too," Mr. Sushil points out.

However, he mentioned that promotion of bio-pesticide is a big challenge as most of the farmers are uneducated and adapting a new innovation is difficult for them. "Even as detailed instructions of bio-pesticides are given by the manufacturers, uneducated farmers can't make use of it," he said.

Drawing a comparison between chemical and biological pesticide, Mr. Sushil said the biggest advantage with the latter is it is eco-friendly. "Bio-pesticide does not harm the farm-friendly insects which is the case with chemical pesticide. Speaking on the container management Mr. Sushil advised farmers that pesticide containers should not be burnt, but be buried after proper rinsing.

"Before burying empty containers, farmers have to crush them to prevent their reuse," he says