

PRESS RELEASE

CropLife India conducts Workshop on “Crop Grouping principles for establishment of National MRLs”

Urges Government of India to discourage off-label use of agrochemicals through implementing crop grouping scheme

New Delhi, 26th July 2024: [CropLife India](#), an association of 17 R&D driven crop science companies, and the **leading voice of the plant science industry in India**, conducted a Workshop on “Crop Grouping principles for establishment of National MRLs” today. *The absence of label claims for spices, fruits, leafy vegetables etc. leave farmers with limited pest management options. In addition, they bear the risk of rejection in international trade on account of off-label use of the agrochemical and the absence of country MRLs.* This workshop will be a milestone in urging the Government of India to discourage off-label use of agrochemicals through implementation of crop grouping scheme.

As per an estimate, out of 554 crops grown in India, more than 85% of crops, due to less acreage or commercial value, don't have the label claim of Crop Protection Products (CPP"s); which leads to off-label use. The implementation of Crop Grouping Principles is the need of the hour; which is part of globally accepted norms. In various countries like USA, EU, Japan and Australia, Crop Grouping Principles were implemented long back which has provided huge benefits to the farmers of those countries. It was a request from the crop protection industry for a long time and a lot of deliberation has been held with the technical experts on the same.

Dr. P. K. Singh, Agriculture Commissioner & Chairman – Registration Committee, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare highlighted “the challenges and opportunities in implementing crop grouping principles in India, is the complexity of India's diverse climatic conditions; from tropical to temperate, varying rainfall, different soils, and a variety of crops and inter-crops; which makes it crucial to adopt a holistic approach”.

Dr. Singh emphasized the importance of concrete outcomes from the workshop, noting, “We have accomplished a lot in this direction, and I hope the concrete deliberations and proceedings from this workshop will help finalize the pointers for the Crop Grouping Government Committee. It is high time we adopt the proceedings of the crop grouping committee. We need to come to a consensus and create plans to ensure no more time or investment is wasted on these studies”.

Dr. Singh even addressed the legal adoption of these principles, mentioning the role of FSSAI, “FSSAI has to adopt the commitments being made regarding MRLs. The future shall hold a smoother process, including the issuance of certificates.”

Dr. J. P. Singh, Plant Protection Adviser, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare highlighted the pressing need to address the challenges of bio-efficacy and safety residues in agriculture. “Considering the scientific principles of bio-efficacy and safety residues, it is high time

to extrapolate and expand scientific data to tackle the challenges posed by off-label pesticide use, which is prevalent in many districts."

Dr. Singh emphasized the need for collaboration and fine-tuning data parameters, "Industry, regulators, and policymakers must work hard to narrow down the gaps in MRL standards at both national and international levels and harmonize these discrepancies to ensure scientific and technical accuracy. We face numerous challenges from climate change and invasive pests. It is crucial to expedite the registration process and reduce off-label pesticide use to provide relief to farmers and the trade. Our ultimate aim is to bring relief to farmers and the trade. We will always support this endeavour, ensuring that no more time or investment is wasted."

Dr. Archana Sinha, Secretary, Central Insecticide Board & Registration Committee, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, congratulated CropLife India on organizing this timely workshop on crop grouping principles and emphasised, "Registration certificates are lifeless without MRLs. By adopting this crop grouping report, we will be moving forward in improving regulatory affairs."

Dr. Sinha stressed on the significance of crop grouping, "Crop grouping will address the issue of off-label pesticides that India faces and expedite MRL fixation for minor crops. It should not be a one-time process; it must be dynamic. Over time, the impact of adopting crop grouping should be assessed to add or delete elements in the MRL fixation process. Monitoring MRLs and keeping moralities in mind during data generation is crucial to understand where we're headed".

Mr. Durgesh Chandra, Secretary General, CropLife India shared, "It is indeed a proud moment that the transparent deliberations within the Department of Agriculture, Central Insecticide Board and industry experts have resulted in the pragmatic Crop Grouping principles. It has always been our endeavour to provide global practices based on sound scientific principles; for the growth of Indian agriculture."

Officials present on the occasion were, **Dr. P. G. Shah**, Chairman, Scientific Panel on Pesticide Residue (SPPR), FSSAI; **Dr. Kaushik Banerjee**, Director, National Research Centre on Grapes, ICAR; **Dr. T. Sonai Rajan**, Assistant Director (Ento.), CIB&RC; **Dr. Poonam Jasrotia**, ADG (Plant Protection & Biosafety), ICAR; **Dr. Vandana Tripathy**, Network Coordinator (AINP) & Scheme In-Charge (MPRNL), All Indian Network Project on Pesticide Residues, ICAR; **Mr. David Lunn**, Ex JMPR Assessor; Agchem Residue, Scientist, Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand; **Mr. Alan Norden**, Board of Director, Minor Use Foundation; to name a few.

The Codex Classification of food and animal feed commodities moving in trade was first adopted by the 18th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, (1989). It is intended primarily to ensure the use of uniform nomenclature and secondarily to classify foods into groups and/or sub-groups for the purpose of establishing group maximum residue limits for commodities with similar characteristics and residue potential. These principles will enhance the label claim of CPP's on member crops of the sub-group once the label claim is approved on representative crop and MRL is set for sub-group. The efforts were made by the Central Insecticides Board and

Registration Committee (CIB&RC) by approving the Crop Grouping principles in 2019 in 407th meeting of the Registration Committee (RC), however, its implementation was delayed as on date.

The recommendations emerged from the workshop will emphasize on early implementation of Crop Grouping Principle to benefit the Indian farmers. This will help in availability of approved CPP's to our farmers to combat the menace of noxious pests, diseases and weeds.

About **CropLife India**:

CropLife India is committed to advancing sustainable agriculture and it is an association of 17 R&D driven member companies in crop protection and the leading voice of the plant science industry in India. We jointly represent ~ 70% of the market and are responsible for 95% of the molecules introduced in the country. Our member companies have annual global R & D spend of 6 billion USD and are firmly committed to engaging with the farming community to enable Safe, Secure Food Supply.

Our Members



Our Associate Members



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