

PRESS RELEASE

CropLife India Raises Concerns Over Sale of Unauthorised Pesticides on E-Commerce Platforms

Presses for a strong joint government-industry framework to enforce rules

New Delhi, 21st January 2026: CropLife India, the leading association of 17 R&D-driven crop protection companies, today raised serious concerns over the unchecked sale of unauthorised crop protection products through e-commerce platforms, calling for urgent strengthening of regulatory supervision, enforcement obligations and accountability in online sale of pesticides. The association noted that as the Government undertakes a broader review of pesticide regulation through the Draft Pesticides Management Bill, 2025, emerging risks linked to online sale must be addressed clearly and explicitly.

The issue was highlighted during CropLife India's **National Conference on Crop Protection Products Sale on E-Commerce Platforms**, held in New Delhi, which brought together policymakers, regulators, industry representatives and other stakeholders to examine how agri-input sales are moving online and what regulatory responses are required to safeguard farmers and the integrity of the supply chain.

Addressing the conference, **Dr. P. K. Singh, Agriculture Commissioner, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India**, noted that basic compliance checks by e-commerce platforms such as GST documents of sellers may not be sufficient when hazardous agri-inputs are sold online. He emphasised the need for stronger quality assurance, traceability and supply-chain accountability and said these issues merit consideration under the Pesticides Management Bill, 2025.

Dr. Subhash Chand, Secretary, CIB&RC, Government of India, observed that while digitisation and e-commerce are expanding rapidly in rural India, they also bring new risks. He stressed that pesticides are hazardous products and that responsibility for quality, compliance and farmer safety must be shared by platforms and manufacturers as online sales grow. **Mr. Ravi Shankar, Domain Lead – Agriculture, ONDC**, highlighted the need for better cataloguing, advisory details and traceability to help farmers identify genuine products and reduce the risk of spurious inputs.

Speaking at the conference, **Mr. Ankur Aggarwal, Chairman, CropLife India** said, "We are not against the sale of pesticides on e-commerce platforms. This engagement is about ensuring that regulatory and enforcement frameworks evolve with the realities of digital commerce. Tackling unauthorised products remains a shared priority for policymakers and the crop protection industry and is critical for farmer safety, food security and consumer trust. Today's conference intends to engage all stakeholders and develop a framework that could effectively address existing gaps."

CropLife India explained that crop protection products are regulated under the **Insecticides Act, 1968** and the **Insecticides Rules, 1971**, which establish a tightly controlled system for sale and distribution. Under this framework, pesticides can only be sold by licensed sellers, for specific products endorsed on their licence, within approved geographic areas and supported by a valid and subsisting **Principal Certificate** issued by the manufacturer or

importer. These controls are designed to ensure product authenticity, traceability and accountability across the supply chain.

However, **under the existing framework, e-commerce platforms facilitating the sale of pesticides are not currently required to obtain licences or approvals specifically under pesticide law, nor are they subject to explicit statutory obligations to verify whether products listed online are endorsed on the seller's licence or supported by valid Principal Certificates.** This creates a regulatory gap in which platforms can enable the listing and sale of pesticides without clear accountability, **increasing the risk of unauthorised products reaching farmers.**

The association noted that pesticides are **being sold online through both marketplace and inventory-based e-commerce models.** In inventory-based models, pesticides may be stored, handled and dispatched from warehouses that are not licensed under the Insecticides Rules, even though identical activities require licensing in the offline supply chain. This weakens regulatory oversight and makes inspection, sampling and traceability significantly more difficult.

CropLife India clarified that **Rule 10E of the Insecticides Rules**, introduced through a 2022 amendment, permits online or doorstep delivery of pesticides, but **does not dilute or override existing requirements relating to licences, Principal Certificates, approved premises, or geographic restrictions.** According to the association, this provision has, in some cases, been **misconstrued** to suggest that online sale or delivery removes the need for licences or authorisations, enabling unauthorised sale through digital channels.

Under the current enforcement architecture, inspections, sampling and verification are conducted primarily at licensed premises. In contrast, **storage in warehouses and movement of pesticides through e-commerce supply chains often fall outside routine regulatory supervision**, limiting the ability of authorities to quickly trace responsibility and take timely action against spurious or illegal products, even when risks are identified.

Mr. Aggarwal reiterated that while the **Draft Pesticides Management Bill, 2025** seeks to strengthen India's pesticide regulatory framework, it does not explicitly address several **critical e-commerce-specific gaps**, including platform-level accountability, licensing obligations in inventory-based models and digital traceability across online supply chains. The association will place its consolidated views on these issues through the formal consultation process.

“Digital commerce is an important and growing channel,” **Mr. Aggarwal** added. “The way forward is regulated enablement. As sale models evolve, regulatory and enforcement frameworks must evolve as well, so that farmers receive genuine, compliant products and confidence in the system is preserved.”

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. 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.

Website: croplifeindia.org

Our Members



Our Associate Members



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