

Crop-protection body flays Kerala's ban on pesticides

Attributes output decline to neglect of science-based agriculture

- V. Sajeev Kumar

The Crop Care Federation of India has taken strong exception to pesticides ban in Kerala, saying that the decision is arbitrary, irrational and inconsistent with the provisions in the Insecticide Act, 1968.

State vs Centre

The Act regulates import, manufacture, sale, transport, distribution of pesticides all over the country. It is under the Union list and therefore only the Central government can make laws through the Parliament.

The State government could not do anything that goes beyond the powers granted to it by the Central Act.

Beginning 2010, the Agriculture Department had arbitrarily banned use of certain pesticides, a position paper released by the CCFI on Pesticides ban in Kerala said.

The reaction of CCFI — the apex body of Indian crop protection industry — comes in the wake of the recent ban on Glyphosate, the weedicide used to control weeds in crops.

Yield loss in major crops

“Promoting organic agriculture does not empower the State government to arbitrarily ban certain federally-registered pesticides for an unspecified period. The area under certified organic agriculture in Kerala is less than one per cent of the total cultivated area. Because of neglect of science-based intensive agriculture, there is an alarming decline in production of all major crops in Kerala,” said the position paper.

Writ petitions

“Our investigations show that there is very high yield loss in the State to pests and diseases due to restrictions put on pesticides’ use. CCFI is determined to take efforts to protect the legitimate rights of farmers to access and use pesticides registered under the Insecticide Act,” said S Ganesan, Advisor (Public & Policy Affairs), CCFI.

There are four writ petitions filed in the Kerala High Court challenging the legal validity of the State government order imposing arbitrary ban, he added.

Output loss

	Production (in tonnes)		Negative growth (%)
	2001-02	2016-17	
Paddy	7,03,504	4,36,483	-38
Pulses	6,281	1,711	-73
Pepper	58,240	34,065	-42
Cashewnut	65,876	27,944	-58
Ginger	50,181	20,478	-59

Source: Agricultural Statistics 2016-17, Kerala Government

