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*PAN India response on the Draft Banning of Insecticides Order 2020 Date : 20.05.2020*

## **Government Draft Order Banning 27 Pesticides Used in India Which are Banned In Other Countries**

*PAN India welcomes the Gazette of Government of India to ban the 27 pesticides, and urges the Agriculture Ministry to review all the remaining pesticides registered in India with the same criteria used for assessing the 27 chemicals and come up with stringent regulatory measures, including a possible ban of more hazardous pesticides.*

In an appreciable move, Government of India is considering banning of 27 highly toxic pesticides, which are currently used in India, but are already banned in one or more countries. In a gazette notification issued on 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture issued a draft order intended to ban 27 pesticides and sought comments or suggestions from those who are likely to be affected by the decision.

The notification says ‘sixty-six insecticides which are banned or restricted or withdrawn in other countries but continue to be registered for domestic use in India’ were reviewed by an Expert Committee set up by the Ministry of Agriculture. The ministry considered recommendations of this committee and recognized that use of the ‘twenty seven insecticides are likely to involve risk to human being and animals as to render it expedient or necessary to take immediate action’.

The draft order has a list of 27 pesticides with decision of the government for each of them. Many of them are highly hazardous pesticides with potential to cause severe health effects such as hormonal changes, neurotoxic effects, reproductive and developmental health effects, carcinogenic effects, as well as environmental impacts such as toxic to bees. Many of them reported to have data deficient for regulatory purposes and noted that alternatives are available for all of them. The following are the list of pesticides proposed to be banned which include insecticides, fungicides and weedicides: 2,4-D, acephate, atrazine, benfuracarb, butachlor, captan, carbendazin, carbofuran, chlorpyrifos, deltamethrin, dicofol, dimethoate, dinocap, diuron, malathion, mancozeb, methimyl, monocrotophos, oxyfluorfen, pendimethalin, quinalphos, sulfosulfuron, thiodicarb, thiophante methyl, thiram, zineb and ziram.

Many of them are extremely and highly toxic pesticides. Some of them are already addressed by State level regulations/bans in India. Monocrotophos was banned briefly by Adilabad District Collector and Ooty District Collector due to rampant illegal use

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and toxicity potential on food, environment and farmers in 2019. In 2018, Punjab Agriculture Department had sought to review licenses and not to issue fresh licenses for five (2,4-D, benfuracarb, dicofl, methomyl and monocrotophos) of the 27 pesticides because of harmful effects on human beings and environmental sustainability and economic viability. Maharashtra government prohibited two of them (monocrotophos and acephate) in 2017 as they were implicated in the high incidence of pesticides poisonings among cotton farming community. The State of Kerala already banned some of these pesticides such as monocrotophos, carbofuran, atrazine, etc. back in 2011 on the grounds of public health concerns.

Responding to the draft notification, Jayakumar Chelaton, Director of Pesticide Action Network (PAN) India noted that ‘this is a hopeful move by the Indian government for protecting public health and environmental well being’. He added that ‘many of the pesticides proposed for ban are implicated in both occupational and self-poisonings in India. Banning them is expected to bring down poisoning incidences and ensuring a safe working farm environment in the country. PAN India is happy to support government of India for eliminating toxic pesticides by replacing them with agroecological farming practice.

Dr. Narasimha Reddy Donthi, a policy expert and Consultant to PAN India stressed that, ‘the decision of government of India to ban those pesticides used in the country, which are already banned in other countries is a much-awaited one. Banning of these pesticides would bring down toxic burden of farming community as well as consumers in India. However, more stringent regulations and bans are inevitable in India as we have more than 280 pesticides currently registered for use. Moreover, for safeguarding farming community and general public in the country, the proposed Pest Management Bill 2020 has to be amended appropriately as the current version introduced in the Rajya Sabha has several lacunae concerning pesticide registration, worker protection, end users of pesticides and immunity to pesticide business and promotion.

Dileep Kumar, Assistant Director of PAN India said that, ‘15 of the 27 pesticides that are proposed to be banned now are considered ‘deemed to be registered pesticides’ in the country owing to data lacunae since several years’. He added ‘several pesticides registered for use in India are highly hazardous which are capable of causing severe short term and long term health consequences to the users and environment. Hence, PAN India urges the Ministry of Agriculture to review all the remaining pesticides that are registered for use in the country with the same criteria used for assessing the

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27 chemicals and come up with stringent actions for protecting human health and environment’.

Analysis by PAN India shows that, currently 289 pesticides are registered for use in India and these 27 pesticides forms less than 10 percent of them. Hence banning these 27 pesticides would not impact food security and agriculture production in the country as the assessment of the government found that alternatives are available to all of them. As several pesticides are registered and approved for use in India for a single crop pest combination, banning some of them would not affect crop health management but would definitely contribute to reducing toxic burden of communities.

Hence PAN India strongly recommends the Agriculture Ministry to ban all these 27 pesticides without delay.

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## **About PAN India**

*PAN India is a public interest, Non profit, research and advocacy organisation working to eliminate human and environmental harm caused by pesticides and uphold agroecology. PAN India is keen to help communities and governments to reduce dependence on toxic chemicals for pest control in agriculture, household as well as public health and to increase the use of sustainable alternatives. PAN India is committed to safe farming, safe living and safe working place. PAN India is working to make India a world leader in Agroecology by empowering farming communities to keep away from toxic pesticides and agrochemicals, and to take up non chemical methods of farming practices that champion traditional knowledge, biodiversity, and farmer participated research in attaining food sovereignty.*