

Present status of pesticides usage and level of awareness among farmers in Jaffna peninsula

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Pest control is mostly dependent on the use of synthetic pesticides in Jaffna, However the pesticides are used inappropriately in intensive cultivation of crops. Due to the increase of pesticide hazards, an attempt was made to understand the present status of the pesticide usage in the fields in eight selected Divisional Secretariats of Jaffna district. The pesticide usage was assessed through questionnaires from randomly selected farmers. Our study indicates that, 42.9% of farmers were adhered to recommended levels whereas 9% used extremely high doses and 18% used slightly higher doses than recommended levels. 29.9% of farmers used levels lower than the recommended levels. It was recorded that 85.6% of farmers mixed different pesticides without recommendation before spraying. Agro chemicals used by the farmers can be categorized based on the labels; yellow label (30.3%), blue label (5.9%) and green label (60.3%). The chemicals which are not recommended for pests or diseases used can be categorized based on their toxicity as represented by the labels; yellow label (73.1%), blue label (14.1%) and green label (12.5%). Agro chemicals used experience by the farmers for more than 15 years was 31.4% and less than 5 years was 36.4%. Percentage of farmers not wearing protective cloths like mask, gloves and not taking bath after spray was 89.1%, 79.7% and 5.1%, respectively. The results of this study revealed that farmers are abruptly using the pesticides to control the pests. Therefore, it is recommended to provide awareness on the hazardous effects of pesticides among the farming community.

Key words: Agro chemicals, Jaffna, pesticides, toxicity

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