

Awareness of farm women about pesticide residue in different foodstuff

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to know the awareness of farm women about pesticide residues in different foodstuff. A sample of 120 farm women was randomly selected from Nagaon and Jorhat in the State of Assam. North West Jorhat Development Block under Jorhat Sub-Division of Jorhat District and Bortradoba Development Block under Nagaon Sub-Division of Nagaon District were selected purposively for the study owing to their proximity to the researchers. From each block, three villages were selected in consultation with block officials of the respective block. From the selected villages 20 respondents were selected who were engaged in crops and vegetable production. Lists of variables were prepared on the basis of the objectives. Data were collected with the help of interview schedule by personal interview method. Farm women had medium level of awareness about pesticide residues in different foodstuff. The findings has shown that farm women were not fully aware about the pesticide residue, which it might be due to their less contact with extension agent, low educational level, not participated any formal training programme and lack of organizational membership.

KEY WORDS : Awareness, Pesticide residues, Farm women

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India is the second largest producer of vegetables in the world, next only to China. India has produced 93.92 million tones of vegetables from the 6.24 million hectares of land per year (Singh and Singh, 2005). Historian believes that it was woman who first started cultivation of crop and initiated the art and science of farming. In recent times also, the woman is playing a pivotal role in agricultural occupation as a manager, decision maker and skilled farm worker. It is estimated that women are responsible for 70 per cent of actual farm work and constitute up to 60 per cent of the farming population. Now-a-day, people use various types of pesticides for the pest management and pest control. But due to the overdose or misuse of pesticides, the excessive residual levels cause health hazards and many other associated problems. Though people use various types of pesticides majority of them were not aware about pesticide toxicity level. Most of the users of pesticides cannot even understand the colour codes given on the label which represent toxicity level of pesticide. In fact, majority of them use highly toxic pesticides. Consumption of pesticide contaminated vegetables immediately affect our body and cause various fatal diseases. It is therefore essential to make the women aware about the safe use of pesticides in order to avoid causing of health hazards and toxic effects on the users.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in the Nagaon and Jorhat districts in the state of Assam. North West Jorhat Development Block under Jorhat Sub -Division of Jorhat District and Bratradoba Development Block under Nagaon Sub- Division of Nagaon District were selected purposively for the study owing to proximity to the researchers. From each block, three villages were selected in consultation with block officials of the respective block. From the selected villages 20 respondents were selected who engaged in crops and vegetable production. Thus, the totals of 120 numbers of respondents were selected randomly for the study. Lists of variables were prepared on the basis of the objectives of the study. Data were collected with the help of interview schedule by personal interview method. Collected data were analyzed by applying frequency and percentage. The fifteen statements were selected related to effect of pesticide residue on foodstuff after discussion with Agricultural scientists, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Assam, progressive farmers and reviewing related literatures to measure the awareness of the respondents in this regards. Necessary modifications in the schedule were made after pre testing with a group of 20 respondents in non-sampling area. Respondents were asked to give their responses in 3 point continuum *i.e.* "fully aware",