

RESEARCH ARTICLE :

Prospects of integrated pest management in India

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SUMMARY : The contribution of agrochemicals in improving food security and human health cannot be undermined but their indiscriminate and injudicious use of in agriculture has resulted in several associated adverse effects such as environmental pollution, ecological imbalances, pesticides residues in food, fruits and vegetables, fodder, soil and water, pest resurgence, human and animal health hazards, destruction of bio-control agents, development of resistance in pests etc. Use of pesticides, globally, has grown over last 20 years to 3.5 billion kg/year, amounting to a world market of \$45 billion. The effectiveness of chemical pesticides in reducing the pest-induced losses has diminished in recent years, resulting in increased cost of pest control and reduced farm profitability. Realizing these threats, the scientific community has been proactive and developed safer alternatives as substitutes for chemical pesticides. Evidences indicate that these provide effective protection against pests when used in combination with other methods of pest control, including a chemical pesticide, which is referred to as Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Moreover it's also difficult to say that pesticides alone can kill pests or alternative tactics alone can control pests. A holistic, systems-oriented integrated, approach is needed, with farmers empowered to innovatively manage soils, water, biological resource, pests, disease vectors, genetic diversity and conserve natural resources in a culturally appropriate manner. The approach of IPM would be meaningless if it will not be transformed and repackaged to suit the farmer's needs. What is therefore needed is an effective extension mechanism, appropriate diffusion approaches and other information support services on crop protection to make the technology usable by the targeted clientele. These IPM approaches must be developed and customized and made well-suited to the social system of small farmers. This paper identifies the scope of IPM in India by which the farmer society can be greatly benefited.

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