

Farmers Perception in Pesticide Usage in Curry Leaf (*Murraya koeinigii* (L.))

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Abstract : Curry leaf (*Murraya koeinigii* (L.)) exported from India had insecticide residues above maximum residue limits, which are hazardous to consumer health and caused rejection of the commodity at the point of entry in Europe and middle east resulting in a check on export of curry leaf. Hence to study current pesticide usage patterns in major curry leaf growing areas, a survey on pesticide use pattern was carried out in curry leaf growing areas in Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh during 2014-15, by interviewing farmers growing curry leaf utilizing the questionnaire to assess their knowledge and practices on crop cultivation, general awareness on pesticide recommendations and use. Education levels of farmers are less, where 13.96 per cent were only high school educated, and 13.96% were illiterates. 18.60% farmers were found cultivating curry leaf crop in less than 1 acre of land, 32.56% in 2-5 acres, 20.93% in 5-10 acres and 27.91% of the farmers in more than 10 acres of land. Majority of the curry leaf farmers (93.03%) used pesticide mixtures rather than applying single pesticide at a time, basically to save time, labour, money and to combat two or more pests with single spray. About 53.48% of farmers applied pesticides at 2 days interval followed by 34.89% of the farmers at 4 days interval, and about 11.63% of the farmers sprayed at weekly intervals. Only 27.91% of farmers thought that the quantity of pesticides used at their farm is adequate, 90.69% of farmers had perception that pesticides are helpful in getting good returns. 83.72% of farmers felt that crop change is the only way to control sucking pests which damages whole crop. About 4.65% of the curry leaf farmers opined that integrated pest management practices are alternative to pesticides and only 11.63% of farmers felt natural control as an alternative to pesticides. About 65.12% of farmers had perception that high pesticide dose will give higher yields. However, in general, Curry leaf farmers preferred to contact pesticide dealers (100%) and were not interested in contacting either agricultural officer or a scientist. Farmers were aware of endosulfan ban (93.04%), in contrast, only 65.12, per cent of farmers knew about the ban of monocrotophos on vegetables. Very few farmers knew about pesticide residues and decontamination by washing. Extension educational interventions are necessary to produce fresh curry leaf free from pesticide residues.

Keywords : Curry leaf, decontamination, endosulfan, leaf roller, psyllids, tetranychid mite

Conference Title : ICFSNPH 2017 : International Conference on Food Safety, Nutrition and Public Health

Conference Location : Zurich, Switzerland

Conference Dates : July 27-28, 2017