

# Opinions of Ministry of Agriculture on Enhancing the Control over Pesticides to Promote the Sound Development of the Pesticide Industry

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As an essential material for agricultural production, pesticides play an important role in the prevention and treatment of harmful agricultural organisms and in the protection of agricultural production, farm produce and eco-environment. Since its reform and opening-up, China has achieved great improvement in the pesticide production and led the world in terms of the production, trade and use of pesticides. Nevertheless, such problems as over-capacity, excessive dose and disordered operation in the fast-growing industry are hampering the sustainable development of agriculture. Therefore, the newly-revised Regulations on Pesticide Administration (hereinafter referred to as "the Regulations") insists in law-based control over pesticides, focuses on problems, improves the control system, and authorizes the agricultural departments to conduct the whole-course supervision which involves the registration, production, use and market supervision of pesticides. To implement the Regulations, perform the duties of pesticide control and promote the sound development of the pesticide industry, the following opinions have been proposed:

## **I. To fully understand the importance and urgency of intensifying control to accelerate the sound development of the pesticide industry**

The Chinese agriculture has entered a new stage, where creating a mode of green agricultural development has become an imperative task. As a special material for agricultural production which is slightly poisonous, pesticide is indispensable in ensuring the safety of agricultural production but would impose some impact on the safety of farm produce and the eco-environment. Hence, it is both challenging and significant to strengthen the control over pesticides.

(1) Reinforcing the control over pesticides is expected in the protection of the national food safety. The priority of the development of modern agriculture is to protect the national food safety and provide people with adequate food. To maintain the strategic bottom of "becoming self-sufficient in gains and consuming absolutely safe food", it is necessary to strengthen the food-producing capacity by increasing yield through land and technology. Climate and environment changes would inevitably cause plant diseases and pests, and such prevention and treatment measures as the application of pesticides can solve the problem and bring great harvest. Therefore, we must enhance the control over pesticides, impose strict requirements on pesticides and promote the rational use, so as to make the prevention and treatment more effective and ensure safe agricultural production.

(2) Reinforcing the control over pesticides is expected in the advancement of green agricultural development. In the past, agricultural resources were excessively developed and excess agricultural chemicals were applied to ensure the supply of important farm produce, but they caused alarming damage to the eco-environment. Therefore, we must intensify the control over pesticides by restricting the excess and irrational use of pesticides and reducing inappropriate use, so that the exhausted environment will be able to recover and the sustainable development of agriculture will be promoted.

(3) Reinforcing the control over pesticides is expected in the efforts to achieve higher-quality and more efficient agricultural production. Thanks to the economic development and the improvement of the consumption structure, residents have been shifting their attention from adequate food to nutritious and healthy food, and great social attention has been paid to food safety. In most cases, the safety of farm produce depends on the control over pesticide residual. Therefore, we must reinforce the control over pesticides, popularize efficient pesticides featuring low risk and little residual, enhance green and standard control, and increase the supply of green, organic farm produce, so as to achieve higher-quality and more efficient agricultural production.

(4) Reinforcing the control over pesticides is expected in the transformation and updating of the pesticide industry. The Chinese pesticide industry is huge but not powerful; worse still, there are such problems as serious over-capacity, insufficient innovation, a low level of industrial concentration, and a disordered pesticide market. Thus, we must enhance the control over pesticides, quicken technological innovation and optimize the industrial layout and the product structure, so as to increase the quality-based benefits and international competitiveness of the Chinese pesticide industry.

## **II. Principles and objectives of intensifying control to accelerate the sound development of the pesticide industry**

### (1) Guidelines

We should implement all the tasks designated in the 18th CPC National Congress, the third, fourth, fifth and sixth sessions of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC, and the important speeches by President Xi Jinping. Following the principle of new development and focusing on the structural reform of agricultural supply side, we should achieve higher-quality and more efficient agricultural production with green development as the direction and with reform and innovation as the driving force. Moreover, we should make use of technological advancement to optimize the industrial layout and the supervision system, intensify the performance of duties, rational use of pesticides and market supervision, and promote the industrial transformation and updating as well as the sound development of the pesticide industry, so as to ensure the safety of agricultural production, farm produce and eco-environment.

### (2) Basic principles

- \* Insist in law-based control over pesticides. We should enhance the awareness of law-based governance and the punishment for unlawful conduct, and improve the supporting regulations and the supervisory system in accordance with the Regulations. Besides, we should intensify the market supervision, maintain the market order and purify the agricultural capital market.
- \* Insist in innovation orientation. We should activate the potential of innovation, speed up the development of new pesticides and new technologies, and strengthen technical innovation in pesticide.
- \* Insist in green development. We should promote the biological and physical prevention and treatment, popularize efficient pesticides featuring low risk and little residual, and establish a system of recycling and disposing of pesticide waste.
- \* Insist in the dominance by the market. We should give play to the decisive role of the market in resource allocation and lead enterprises to speed up technical innovation; we should give a better play to the role of the government and offer better services by delegating power and strengthening regulation.
- \* Insist in overall development. We should consider both domestic and foreign pesticide markets and give equal importance to economic and social benefits, resources and environment.

### (3) Objectives

- \* Optimize the industrial layout. By 2020, the enterprises manufacturing chemical and active pesticide ingredients in the chemical industry parks or industrial parks will have accounted for at least 60%; by 2025, the number will have increased to over 80%.
- \* Optimize the product structure. By 2020, the number of newly-registered homogeneous products will have decreased by 30%; by 2025, the number will have decreased to 50%. Highly poisonous pesticides will have been eliminated in order, while bio-pesticides and new efficient, lowly-poisonous and environmentally-friendly pesticides will have been developed.

\* Improve products. By 2020, at least 95% of pesticides will have passed the random quality inspection; at least 96% of farm produce will have passed the pesticide residual inspection. The production and operation of pesticides will become more standard, and the pesticide market will become more stable.

\* Increase the utilization rate of pesticides. By 2020, the utilization rate of pesticides will have risen to over 40%; by 2025, the utilization rate will have been around that of developed countries.

\* Improve the pesticide control system. The pesticide control institutions and the equipment and personnel of the comprehensive agricultural law-enforcement teams at county level will be improved, and a whole-course and full-coverage supervisory system of pesticides will be established in three to five years.

### **III. Impose strict requirements on registered access and improve the production structure of pesticides**

(1) Intensify the instruction for registered classification. We should support the registration and popularization of efficient, lowly-poisonous and little-residual pesticides; support the registration of a small number of pesticides for distinctive crops and appropriately simplify the registration materials and quicken the approval with the prerequisite that the quality of these pesticides is high; support the registration of bio-pesticides and exempt natural enemy organisms from registration. Moreover, we should restrict the registration of highly poisonous and risky pesticides and ban the registration of unsafe pesticides, those with potential danger, and those without effective, safe prevention or regulatory measures in production or use.

(2) Speed up the innovation of pesticide technologies. We should improve the pesticide innovation system and mechanism, and transform the pesticide innovation dominated by the state into the one based on the cooperation among enterprises, universities and research institutions. We should also deepen the equity reform of scientific achievements of pesticides, establish a technical transaction platform, promote the achievement transformation and application, and ignite research fellows' passion for innovation. Besides, we should encourage enterprises to invest more in scientific research and develop new efficient, lowly-risky pesticides which cause little residual; support the application registration of new pesticide researchers and institutions; and quicken the establishment of a complete pesticide innovation system and a supporting knowledge property right management system.

(3) Raise the threshold of pesticide registration. We should take effective measures to control the quantity of pesticides in an appropriate way. For the pesticides which share the same active constituents and forms, the number of concentration gradients of active constituents should be no more than three. We should strictly control the registration of the pesticides of mixed preparations, and the number of active constituents of mixed preparations should not be over three. For the pesticides sharing the same active constituents and forms, the number of proportions and concentration gradients should be no more than three. We should encourage the improvement of formula or forms registered pesticides and eliminate the outdated ones in time.

(4) Establish a pesticide exit mechanism. We should intensify the monitoring and evaluation of the safety and effectiveness of registered pesticides, conduct regular evaluation of the pesticides which have been registered for more than 15 years, and quicken the elimination of the pesticides which are highly risky for humans, animals and eco-environment. We should not extend the registration of the pesticides which are found highly hazard or risky or we should cancel the registration and ban and restrict the use of the pesticides. Moreover, we should urge the producers and operators of these pesticides to recall problematic products. We should reinforce the risk evaluation of highly poisonous pesticides and quicken the elimination of these pesticides with the principle "banning one right after a new qualified one".

(5) Enhance the registration test management. We should standardize the application, review and management of pesticide registration test units. The provincial record management is adopted for the pesticide registration test, and the pesticide registration test on new pesticides must be approved by Ministry of Agriculture. Test applicants must be responsible for the authenticity and consistency of samples, and ensure that the pesticides they produce or they authorize others to process are consistent with the samples in the registration test. The registration test unit should conduct the registration test according to the technical norms and methods to ensure the accuracy of the test data. The provincial competent agricultural departments should enhance the supervision on the safety risk of the registration test and the implementation of preventative measures. In case of any uncontrollable safety risk in the registration test, they should order that the test be suspended.

#### **IV. Impose strict requirements on production access and optimize the layout of the pesticide industry**

(1) Intensify the regulation of the pesticide industry. The provincial agricultural departments should push forward the research on the development strategies of the pesticide industry, implement the national industrial policies, optimize the industrial layout, and promote the transformation and upgrading of pesticide enterprises. We should control the scale of production, accelerate the elimination of the highly-polluting and risky outdated pesticide enterprises in an appropriate and orderly way, and restrict the unplanned expansion and repetitive construction of pesticide enterprises. We should increase the concentration of pesticide enterprises. New pesticide enterprises must be established in a chemical industry park at a provincial or a higher level; relocated ones or those which expand the production of active pesticide ingredients must be in a chemical industry park or an industrial park at a municipal (prefectural) or a higher level. Policies should be made to nurture large enterprises and encourage enterprises to expand production scale and improve quality and benefit through merger and restructuring. It is hoped that a group of small and medium-sized pesticide enterprises will be merged and restructured in three to five years to eliminate a group of weak pesticide enterprises and cultivate a group of large ones, so as to increase the competitiveness of pesticide enterprises.

(2) Reinforce the control over production permit. The principle of "One Certificate for One Enterprise" is followed in the control over pesticide production permit, and the production license is issued by the provincial agricultural departments. The requirements on access must be strict. Pesticide production enterprises must have complete facilities and equipment for environmental protection and safe production, a fixed production location, well-located factories, the automatic production equipment and facilities that meet the requirements of production, as well as a complete management system. The approval procedure must be strict. The provincial competent agricultural departments should strictly implement the measures of production permit management and make public the conditions, procedure, time limit and requirements of getting the license. The technical review must be strict. The technical review and on-site examination should be conducted according to the rules of the pesticide production permit review, so as to ensure that they are consistent with the rules of pesticide production. The supervision after the approval of pesticide production permit should be enhanced and the inspection should be conducted in good time to ensure strict approval standards and orderly operation.

(3) Increase the responsibility for safe production. We should implement the quality management system and lead pesticide enterprises to strictly observe the product quality standards in their production; adopt the management featuring traceable electronic information code of products to make production reviewable and quality controllable throughout the process. We should define the responsibilities of safe production, strictly implement the production procedure and the job safety system, follow the occupational health rules, eliminate potential danger and ensure safe production. Besides, we should define the duties of environmental protection, strictly follow the national environmental protection standard, enhance the governance of environmental pollution, and reduce pollution sources, exhaust, effluent and solid waste. Any violation of laws and rules should be investigated and treated according to law by cooperating with environmental pollution and safety supervision authorities.

## **V. Impose strict requirements on business access and standardize the pesticide market**

(1) Enhance the control over business permit. The business license is issued by local agricultural departments at a county or a higher level. The requirements must be strict. The operators should have received education in a professional institution and have the knowledge and capabilities to help farmers with the selection and rational use of pesticides; they should possess the devices to screen and recognize traceable electronic information codes and a computer management system for recording the purchase and marketing of pesticides. The review must be strict. The agricultural departments at county level should check the business location and supporting facilities on the spot and make sure that food, edible farm produce and feedstuff are simultaneously sold at the location. Those who operate pesticides on the Internet must have a physical store and clearly show the information and photos of pesticide business license and products on the Internet, and they must strictly follow the management rules of the Internet. The tracing of the approval of pesticide business permit should be enhanced and supervision should be conducted timely to ensure standard and orderly business approval.

(2) Define the designated locations for the business of restrictively-used pesticides. Ministry of Agriculture has issued the List of Restrictively-used Pesticides, and the provincial agricultural departments plans the business layout of restrictively-used pesticides and verifies and issues the business license. Those which sell restrictively-used pesticides should sell products at designated stores and be subject to the source-tracing management, and customers should purchase with their real names. The business location should be equipped with the facilities and equipment for storage and safety. The operators must hire the salesmen who have worked in the pesticide field for over two years and can provide corresponding instruction for pesticide users. Selling restrictively-used pesticides on the Internet is banned.

(3) Increase the duties of business management. Pesticide sellers should be led to spontaneously follow the national laws and regulations and sell products in an honest and standard way. The supervision should be intensified. The business locations, sellers and ledger management of pesticides which fail to meet the rules or those who sell pesticides beyond the limits should be ordered to make timely correction. The business license of those whose correction fail to meet the standards will be rescinded according to the law. The technical training should be enhanced. Relevant raining should be offered to pesticide operators on a regular basis to improve their operation and service. The quality supervision should be reinforced. The product sources of pesticide operators should be standardized; the records of purchase and selling should be kept; pesticides should not be processed or sub-packaged; and problematic products should be recalled in time. Those who violate the laws and regulations will be punished.

## **VI. Improve the instruction on the use of pesticides to ensure safe agricultural production**

(1) Promote the rational selection and use of pesticides. A system of rational selection and use of pesticides should be established and improved under the principle of focusing on prevention and combining prevention with treatment. We should help farmers with the selection of pesticides according to the local plantation system, crop structure and growth process, and prevent the irrational use of pesticides from causing an increase in cost and the problems of quality and safety. Farmers should be led to use pesticides according to the scope, dose and method of utilization on the labels and reap farm produce during the safe interval as specified on the labels. Highly poisonous pesticides are banned from being used for vegetables, melons, fruits, tea, fungi or Chinese medical herbs. Professional plant protection teams should be encouraged to purchase and use restrictively-used pesticides in a standard way. The departments of forestry and food should be assisted in the use of corresponding pesticides.

(2) Increase the efficiency of pesticides. We should deepen the campaign of “zero growth” in the use of pesticides and take measures to reduce the use of pesticides. We should support professional plant protection teams in the standard prevention and treatment of plant diseases and pests and increase the effects, popularize such green prevention and control technologies as biological and physical prevention and treatment, control plant diseases and pests and reduce the use of chemical pesticides. We should also speed up the popularization of efficient pesticide-application machines, conduct targeted pesticide application, and increase the utilization rate of pesticides.

(3) Quicken the formulation of the standards of pesticide residual. The standards of pesticide residual are the scientific foundation for evaluating the quality and safety of edible farm produce as well as the basic norms of standardizing the production and marketing of edible farm produce. We should formulate the standards of pesticide residual, with emphasis on the ones of pesticide residual limit of vegetables, fruits and distinctive farm produce, and initiate the formulation of the standards of pesticide residual limit of imported farm produce. Besides, we should speed up the standard integration and transformation, help farmers with standard production, and ensure the quality and safety of farm produce.

## **VII. Reinforce the supervision on the pesticide market to protect the interests of farmers**

(1) Improve the system of supervision and random inspection. We should conduct the supervision and random inspection on pesticides according to laws and impose strict requirements on the entity, procedure and method of random inspection, so as to ensure the authenticity and effectiveness of random inspection. And we should conduct the supervision and random inspection on the pesticides in the domination areas according to the principle of “double random inspections with the release of results”, with the inspection covering all pesticide producers and distributors, release the results of random inspections in time according to laws, and establish credit files for enterprises.

(2) Punish illegal act according to laws. The producers and sellers who have been verified as producing and selling counterfeit pesticides respectively will be punished according to laws; and the licenses of those involving severe violation will be revoked. The direct person in charge of the pesticide enterprises which produce or sell pesticides without required licenses or whose licenses have been revoked will be banned from participating in the production and marketing of pesticides for 10 years. The production and business licenses of the pesticide producers and sellers who hire a banned employee will be revoked according to laws. Those who cause serious quality and safety accidents or are suspected of committing crimes will be transferred to the judicial authority in time and will be convicted according to laws.

## **VIII. Improve the system construction to raise the level of pesticide management**

(1) Promote the construction of management teams. The provincial agricultural departments should establish a pesticide management institution with matched duty performance. The agricultural departments of prefecture- and county-level cities should define corresponding institutions and offer corresponding personnel and conditions according to the requirements on the duties of pesticide management. We should promote the construction of a comprehensive agricultural law-enforcement team, focus on strengthening the law-enforcement ability of the comprehensive law-enforcement institutions of county-level cities, and establish a well-disciplined and professional pesticide management team featuring honesty, fairness, high quality and good equipment.

(2) Intensify the duties of pesticide management. We should specify the supervision duties for institutions and individuals to make duties clear and combine duties with rights; enhance the control over the risk in honest governance and define the points of control over the risk in honest governance in the registration, production and business permit of pesticides, so as to ensure the transparent exercise of rights as well as honest governance. We should reinforce supervision and inspection. The competent departments should supervise the duties of the subordinate departments, the implementation of the evaluation system, and the process of the evaluation. In case of illegal conduct, they should order the departments concerned to make correction or propose punishment. We should implement the confidentiality and withdrawal system for the administrative approval personnel of pesticides, so as to make approval fair and impartial.

(3) Accelerate the information-based management. We should boost the establishment of a digital platform of pesticides which covers registration, test, production and marketing according to the principle of "prioritize standards, promote sharing, standardize planning, start with pilot implementation and synchronize advancement", and promote the whole-course, all-element and whole-system supervision on pesticides. Moreover, we should conduct whole-course tracking, check in different stages, detect problems in time and closely follow correction; and achieve the interconnection, source-tracing and real-time inquiry of the information about pesticides, so as to improve the information-based pesticide management.

(4) Give play to the role of the industry association. We should give full play to the role of the industry association of pesticides in the development of the pesticide industry, and develop the exchange and cooperation among countries and enterprises as well as between enterprises and research institutes. Besides, we should promote self-discipline in the industry, standardize corporate behaviors, conduct credit rating of pesticide enterprises and support the advancement of the pesticide industry.

Ministry of Agriculture  
June 25, 2017