

3. Draft Pesticides Management Bill, 2025 – Polity

The Agriculture Ministry released the draft Pesticides Management Bill, 2025, seeking public comments on the legislation that aims to replace the Insecticides Act, 1968, and the Insecticides Rules, 1971. It aims to combat the growing menace of spurious pesticides and strengthening farmer welfare through stricter regulation and the use of technology.

Major Features

Institutional Architecture and Regulatory Bodies

Central Pesticides Board (CPB)

1. To be constituted within six months from the commencement of the Act.
2. Functions as the apex advisory and regulatory body on pesticides at the national level.
3. Provides scientific, technical, and policy guidance to the Central and State Governments.
4. Advises on matters relating to pesticide safety, risk assessment, environmental impact, and international best practices.
5. Ensures harmonisation of pesticide regulation with human health, environmental protection, and sustainable agriculture goals.

Registration Committee

1. To be constituted within six months of the Act coming into force.
2. Acts as a specialised expert panel responsible for examining and deciding applications for pesticide registration.
3. Evaluates pesticides on the basis of safety, bio-efficacy, necessity, and risk–benefit analysis.
4. Empowers evidence-based decision-making rather than discretionary approvals.

Reform-Oriented and Technology-Driven Measures

1. Emphasises digital governance to reduce delays, discretion, and procedural opacity.
2. Introduction of online portals for registration, licensing, reporting, and compliance monitoring.
3. Enables traceability of pesticides across the supply chain, from manufacture/import to end use.
4. Supports transparency, ease of doing business, and regulatory accountability.

Pesticide Registration Framework

Mandatory digital registration for any person or entity intending to

1. Import pesticides
2. Manufacture pesticides

Registration decisions based on

1. Human and animal safety
2. Environmental impact, including effects on soil, water, and biodiversity
3. Efficacy and agronomic necessity, preventing redundant or hazardous products

Allows differentiated regulation for

1. New pesticides
2. Generic formulations
3. Bio-pesticides and low-toxicity alternatives

Licensing and Compliance Mechanism

Licensing made mandatory for

1. Manufacturing
2. Selling and stocking
3. Displaying and transporting pesticides

4. Any commercial pesticide-related operation

Licensing Officers empowered to

1. Grant, amend, suspend, or cancel licenses
2. Enforce compliance with statutory conditions

Obligations on license holders include

1. Maintenance of detailed records and transaction logs
2. Compliance with infrastructure, storage, and safety norms
3. Adherence to labelling, packaging, and transport standards
4. Enhances accountability at each stage of the pesticide lifecycle.

Review, Suspension, and Cancellation Provisions – Registrations and licenses are not permanent or unconditional. Authorities may

1. Review approvals periodically
2. Suspend or cancel registrations if risks are found unacceptable

Grounds for cancellation include

1. Violation of registration or licensing conditions
2. Emergence of new scientific evidence on health or environmental hazards

Provides a formal procedure for banning pesticides, ensuring

1. Due process
2. Scientific justification
3. Legal clarity

Enforcement, Monitoring, and Centre–State Coordination

Pesticide Inspectors and Licensing Officers empowered with

1. Inspection and search powers
2. Authority to seize non-compliant products

State Governments required to

1. Submit periodic compliance and enforcement reports
2. Strengthen field-level monitoring mechanisms

Central Government powers include

1. Calling for data and information from states
2. Issuing directions to ensure uniform enforcement
3. Taking corrective action where implementation gaps exist

Penalties and Deterrence – Introduces stronger penalty provisions to enhance deterrence. Allows state-level authorities to impose higher penalties in cases of compounding of offences. Addresses earlier criticism of weak enforcement and low penalties under the old regime. Encourages compliance through a mix of regulatory oversight and punitive measures.

Significance of the Bill

Modernisation of Pesticide Governance– Replaces outdated regulatory frameworks with a technology-enabled, risk-based approach. Aligns pesticide regulation with contemporary scientific standards and global norms.

Strengthened Safety and Environmental Protection – Prioritises human health, farm worker safety, and ecological sustainability. Facilitates timely withdrawal of hazardous pesticides, reducing long-term public health costs.

Institutional Clarity and Accountability – Establishes clear institutional roles between advisory, registration, and enforcement bodies. Reduces regulatory ambiguity and overlapping authority.

Support to Sustainable Agriculture – Encourages responsible pesticide use and opens space for bio-pesticides and safer alternatives. Contributes to sustainable intensification and environmental conservation in Indian agriculture.

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