

10 facts about pesticides

Crop protection products or pesticides are one of the vital tools that help farmers grow healthy crops. Pesticides keep our food free from moulds, insects and their poisonous by-products. Pesticides benefit us in many other ways.

1. For protection: Pesticide is a broad term that comprises all chemical substances used to control insects, diseases, weeds, fungi and other “pests” on plants, fruits, vegetables, animals and in buildings. Fungicides, herbicides, sanitizers, growth regulators, rodenticides, soil fumigants and insecticides fall under the category of pesticides or crop protection chemicals.

2. For public health

Pesticides safeguard public health by controlling or eliminating pests that cause disease and property damage. They reduce waterborne and insect transmitted diseases such as Malaria, Lyme disease and West Nile virus.

3. For consumers

The safety of pesticides for consumers, users and the environment is based upon rigorous tests determined for well-defined uses. Pesticide manufacturers take their product stewardship responsibilities, including end-user training, with extreme seriousness.

4. For farmers

Pesticides help farmers increase crop productivity by 20–50 percent and are valuable and indispensable tools for the sustainable production of high-quality food, feed and fibre.

5. For families and communities

Pesticides help raise the quality of life for farmers and their communities all over the world. Pesticides remove the hardship of hand weeding, giving farmer families the choice to pursue education and opportunities away from their fields.

6. For productivity

Pesticides are essential for achieving the full economic benefits of modern farming. In the absence of pesticides, even the highest quality seed, fertiliser and irrigation systems will not deliver their potential productivity.

7. For the environment

Pesticides enable farmers to produce more crops per unit area with less tillage, thus reducing deforestation, conserving natural resources and curbing soil erosion. Pesticides are also critical for the control of invasive species and noxious weeds.

8. For quality

The cost of research, development and registration for a new pesticide ranges from US\$150 to 200 million. Only 1 in 20,000 chemicals make it from the laboratory to farmers’ fields.

9. For safety

Pesticides are among the most rigorously regulated chemicals in the world, and re-registration processes ensure that their safety is regularly assessed based upon latest science.

10. For better nutrition

Pesticides ensure that consumers have access to food that is safer, more nutritious, and more affordable than ever before. Pesticides combat global malnutrition and starvation and help low-income families in developed countries afford more fresh fruit and vegetables.