

Food Safety: Solving Pesticide-Related Problems

The Fifth National Health Assembly

Having considered the report on Food Safety: Solving Pesticide-Related Problems,¹

Recognizing that improper use of chemical pesticides by farmers, weak policy implementation, weak enforcement of the law and irresponsible sales promotion adversely affect the well-being of farmers and consumers and that the trend of pesticide import has risen every year and among them are carbofuran, methomyl, dicotofos and EPN,

Acknowledging that the Hazardous Substances Amendment Act B.E. 2551 (2008) stipulates that all types of pesticide must be re-registered by August 2011 and the cabinet's resolution on 10 March 2009 advised the hazardous substances committee and relevant agencies to disseminate information to stakeholders so that they could respond with comprehensive feedback and information along with support data and evidence for the sake of transparency, and to set up an ad hoc committee on control of advertisement and direct sales of hazardous substances used in agriculture,

Acknowledging that Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) is a tool used in the production of safe foods for farmers and consumers,

Concerned that the selection of qualified representatives of public interest organizations may not accord with the intent of the law and that the permission allowing chemical pesticides imported before 22 August 2011 to be sold for another two years does not accord with the intent of the law aimed at protecting the well-being of Thai people,

Has, therefore, passed the following resolutions:

1. Requesting the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to

1.1 Designate the Department of Agriculture to

1.1.1 Review registration approval of chemical pesticides used in production processes of the agricultural sector, particularly carbofuran, methomyl, dicotofos and EPN, to classify them as hazardous substances type 4,

1.1.2 Improve registration procedure and add an element to the composition of a technical sub-committee to include experts from concerned authorities and academic institutions as well as representatives from public interest organizations specializing in consumer protection, based on toxicological information, health problems, and problems in manufacturing countries, as well as disclosing registration data of chemical pesticides with adverse effects to the general public,

1.1.3 Stipulate guidelines for banning use of hazardous substances or re-classifying hazardous substances by expediting studies and data collection in order to propose to the hazardous substance committee that chemical pesticides with severe effects which have already been banned by several countries be classified as hazardous substances type 4 and to suggest that highly toxic pesticides be added in the watch list,

1.1.4 Advise the hazardous substance committee to control advertisement and direct sales of agricultural hazardous substances in strict compliance with the pesticide management policy aiming at mitigating health effects according to the cabinet's resolution on 10 March 2009, and to pursue amendment of the Hazardous Substances Act B.E. 2535 (1992) in order to incorporate additional provision concerning control of advertisement and direct sales of hazardous substances used in agriculture and to solicit the civil societies, particularly consumer protection advocates, to participate in the implementation of relevant agencies in dealing with hazardous substances;

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1.2 Collaborate with the Ministry of Public Health, with the participation of every sector, to determine maximum residue limit (MRL) values and enhance knowledge in the society so as to protect the public well-being;

1.3 Set up a committee to push for standards and guidelines as well as to take action to ensure production of safe foods free from harmful effects of chemical pesticides. In this undertaking, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives is the principal agency collaborating with the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Industry, National Food Institute and Thai Chamber of Commerce in the efforts to make GAP mandatory legal requirements by placing emphasis on the domestic market system, markets in department stores and export markets, while management mechanisms are to be set up at each level to ensure that farmers gain knowledge and understanding and put them into practice.

2. Requesting the Ministry of Industry, in the capacity of the secretary of the hazardous substance committee, to improve selection criteria of qualified persons pursuant to the Hazardous Substances Act. In this undertaking, public interest organizations are advised to select their representatives in each field to act truly on their behalf in accordance with the intent of the law.

3. Requesting the Ministry of Public Health to be the principal agency, collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and Ministry of Industry, with the Food Safety Operation Center under the Ministry of Public Health to act as the center for management of food safety information throughout the food chain and develop an alert system to notify the public of pesticide contamination events on a regular basis.

4. Requesting the Ministry of Finance to conduct a feasibility study and explore approaches for the setup of a compensation fund to provide remedies for health and economic impacts from use of chemical pesticides, and to support safe production according to GAP standards and sustainable agricultural systems by collecting tax from pesticide importers, producers and distributors and/or conducting a feasibility study and exploring approaches for tax collection of chemical pesticides.

5. Requesting the Ministry of Commerce to serve as the principal agency collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Public Health and every sector in the efforts to facilitate implementation of an action plan that will establish Thailand as a safe food center meeting GAP and Thai GAP standards and as a regional organic farming center, while this action plan is expected to be presented to the government within one year.

6. Requesting the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to present a progress report to the Sixth National Health Assembly.