

## **Pesticides Management Bill, 2020**

### **Why in News?**

The Union Cabinet has approved the Pesticides Management Bill, 2020 that seeks to replace the existing Insecticides Act of 1968.

### **What is the Bill about?**

- The Bill will regulate the business of pesticides and compensate farmers for losses from the use of spurious agrochemicals.
- Farmers will get to know about the pesticides, their risk and alternatives, and this will be in open source and in all languages digitally.

### **What are the provisions of the Bill?**

- **Compensation** - If there is any loss because of the fake or low quality of pesticides then there is a provision for compensations.
- To ensure speedier compensation for these losses, the Bill moots setting up a dedicated fund of Rs 50,000 crore.
- This will be raised from the fines charged from the defaulting pesticides companies and contributions from the Central and state governments.
- **Central Pesticides Board** - This board will regulate the production, trade, and use of pesticides.
- It will comprise representatives from the Centre, states and farmers.
- **Promotion** of environment- and health-friendly organic pesticides is among the other notable features of this Bill.
- **Penalty** - A key proposal was to raise penalties on the sale of prohibited or spurious pesticides to ₹50 lakh and up to 5 years' imprisonment.
- This penalty was raised from the current ₹2,000 and up to 3 years' imprisonment.

### **Why such a Bill is needed?**

- The pesticides industry has grown haphazardly, resulting in the emergence of many **fake** and **poor-quality chemicals**.
- Only around 300 pesticides have been formally registered for production and use in the country.
- But the number of chemical formulations in circulation is far larger because of the production and sale of **unregistered molecules**.

- Several **pesticides banned abroad are continued to be used** in India, causing deaths and grievous injuries to the farm workers.
- The injudicious and **indiscriminate use of pesticides** is causing widespread air, soil and water pollution.

### **What are the criticisms?**

- By removing the applicability of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, the Bill has favoured decriminalisation of agro-input manufacturing.
- The existing draft provides inadequate representation to States in both pesticide board and the registration committee.
- As States have the best understanding on the agro-ecological climate, environment and soil conditions, they should have a say in the final decision making on pesticide.
- Many of these misgivings could have been avoided by seeking public comments on the final draft of the Bill.

### **How the new law should be?**

- The new proposed law is expected to deter the manufacture and sale of such hazardous chemicals.
- It should formulate stricter norms for approving new molecules.
- It should oblige the farmers to use them cautiously in the recommended manner to avoid leaving any traces in the farm produce.

**Source: The Hindu, Business Standard**

