

IMPACT OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

Make in India, an initiative launched by the Government of India (GOI) to encourage national, as well as multi-national companies to manufacture their products in India. However, nowhere does a mention to impose restrictions on imports, whereas an effort needs to be made to subsequently reduce dependence on imports and become more self-reliant.

It is evident that the recent directives of the Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmer Welfare (DAC&FW) to pressurize the Registration Committee (RC) to take decisions that are ultra-virus to the Insecticides Act, 1968 (IA1968) and Rules, 1971 (IR 1971). The Act by its very definition states 'An Act to regulate the import, manufacture, sale, transport, distribution and use of insecticides with a view to prevent risk to human beings or animals, and for matters connected therewith'. The Insecticides Act, 1968 by its very definition does not distinguish amongst import or manufacture, therefore we believe parity should be there between imports and manufacture while framing

guidelines, in a manner not to compromise the quality and safety of such products.

While developed countries have moved on from manufacturing hazardous chemicals in their respective countries due to environment concerns, India is trying to encourage indigenous manufacture of the same risking Indian environment and effect to public health. Wherein, it is worth to mention that the Make in India initiative should be more directed towards local manufacture of new and green chemical products.

Role of Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmer Welfare in 'Make in India' Campaign

DAC&FW has always placed the concern with respect to Indian Agriculture, with particular focus on the farmer to make India self-sufficient in food production, and quite successfully has addressed the issue since the on-set of the Green Revolution. Primary duty is to safeguard and provide affordable, efficacious and safe agricultural inputs to the Indian farmer. The

Government's main aim of revising the MoA to MoA & FW, was to focus on the well being of the Indian farmer.

Since the import of technical grade pesticides as one of the major in-puts in protecting the crops against any pest infestation, have been approved for import only after assuring its safety & efficacy do not pose any health or quality concerns in comparison to those manufactured indigenously, further the fact that safety evaluation of Technical Imports is far more stringent than indigenous manufactured norms.

So while there will be no compromise in safety or quality parameters and a potential adverse impact on affordability, the policy would run converse to the primary objectives of DAC&FW. In fact availability of quality technical imports by multiple sources increases healthy competition within the industry. This shall benefit farmers in attaining affordable quality pesticide availability without compromising quality and safety of the product.

Impact of import restrictions on the other hand will lead to scarcity of supply of vital crop protection products required depending upon the crop during the season across the country. Limiting the source of supplies of a product, potentially will give considerable rise to spurious products in the market leading to their harmful effects on the flora, fauna and abiotic factors.

Competition increases when numbers of registrants are active in the market leading to inbuilt mechanism in correction of pricing of a product. Immediate restrictions on imports of technical grade pesticides will lead to abnormal profits for a select few companies which may have or pose to have a brief period of monopolistic presence and effect on Indian economy and undue increase in prices of pesticide products for the farmers and agriculture commodities for the consumers.

Defeating the mandate of DAC&FW

Restriction on import of pesticides impact the SME/MSME segment of industry which are the prime supply of formulated pesticides to the Indian Farmer, not to forget the price increase that can be clearly anticipated to occur in such a scenario.

Since the products are technical in nature and are not only required to be formulated either at the importers end for indigenous manufacture of its approved formulations, or formulated by other SME/MSME. Employment may be affected wherein employees of the SME/MSME sector may be rendered unemployed due to non-availability of technical to the latter. It may also be worth mentioning that the technical importers

are the actual and majority of the suppliers of technical to the SME/MSME sector companies formulating the pesticides and making the same available across the country. The whole chain of supply is affected and Plant Protection in Indian Agriculture is expected to be impacted.

The technical pesticide is not meant for direct application for crop protection and is not a finished product for actual use. It is required to be formulated as an end use product by the farmers for crop protection application in the field. Hence, it is worth mentioning



Fecal Sludge into FERTILIZERS

Human urine and faecal matter are a rich source of essential plant nutrients. Since ancient times, human excreta, 'nightsoils', has been collected from towns and villages and spread in raw or composted form on fields in the surrounding farmland. However, most of the countries have considered this as an informal treatment. But China has been used human waste to fertilize fields for more than 4,000 years. A growing portion of China's toilet waste is converted into fertilizer and biogas. There, most of the farm operations are highly dependent on local resources, such as drawing water from seriously polluted rivers and lakes and using human sewage as fertilizers. In Beijing, 6,800 tons of human excrement is treated each day by some estimates: enough to fill almost three Olympic-size swimming pools. After thousands of years of cultivation, China's soil is still fertile and suitable for farming, and soil erosion is not yet common. Also, Chinese farmers have been frequently used this practice in order to reduce the expenditure



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