



ACFI welcomes the Guidelines (SOP) issued by the Indian government on drone applications

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The Agro Chem Federation of India (ACFI) recently published comments on the Guidelines issued by the Central Government on Drone Applications.

They said that the recent times have impacted all sections of Indian society and economy of the country. However, Indian Agriculture remains the only sector, which has been able to sustain and serve the nation's food and nutritional requirements. There is a greater need than ever before to provide the farmers with improved techniques, agrochemicals and technology, which are cost and time effective. India, today, ranks sixth globally and fourth in Asia in terms of global sale of chemicals. India is also globally acclaimed for the export of high quality and cost-effective crop protection chemicals. India is the fourth largest producer of agrochemicals globally. Further, export of chemicals and chemical products grew at a CAGR of 7.2% between FY16 and FY20. Specialty chemicals account for over 50% of chemical exports, dominated by agrochemicals, dyes and pigments, etc.

ACFI is glad to note that the Government of India is also continuously working for the betterment of Indian Farmers through its various policies and initiatives such as Doubling of Farmers' Income, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, PM Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana and many more.

Coming to the various schemes, Digital Sky Platform is one such recent initiative of government, wherein they have acknowledged the importance of drones, machine learning, and artificial intelligence to promote precision agriculture and to empower the farmer to adapt to specific environments and make prudent choices accordingly. The accumulated gains of modern and precision technology will help in regulating crop health, crop treatment, crop scouting, irrigation, and carrying out field soil analysis and crop damage assessments. The drone survey helps to boost crop yields and minimize time of application and expenses on agriculture inputs. The

government has released a standard operating procedure (SoP) for use of drones for the purpose of spraying pesticides on agricultural crops and also framed guidelines for approval of label claims for spray of pesticides by drones for approval by Central Insecticides Board & Registration under Insecticides Act, 1968 and Rules, 1971.

"ACFI whole heartedly supports Government of India in their new initiative. The application of pesticides using drones has great potential as we move towards its commercialization to achieve new heights of agriculture growth. Not only it will help the farmers to save money and time but it will also reduce the health hazards that are caused while Spraying the plant protection chemicals on various crops. The new guidelines ensure that only the trained and licensed drone operators will spray the product as per the requirement, which will help in reducing wastage and increasing efficiency. Whereas the trials are still ongoing for various drones and related components, we are hopeful that it will revolutionize Indian farming," explains ACFI.

ACFI requests Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India to keep the focus intact and fast track the registration process so that Indian Farmers are able to reap the benefits of this new technology at the earliest and gain maximum output out of it.

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