



Agronomists say the area should be considered because some areas are sensitive and the valuable plants nearby could be affected by drift. FILE PHOTO

Ways to pick effective pesticides

Are pests making your farming days a nightmare? **David Mafabi** explores effective ways of choosing the right pesticide.

Pesticides are important tools in pest management, but most of them are toxic by nature. Pesticides can thus be dangerous to crops, humans, animals and the environment. This means that while



choosing a pesticide, it is important to read and understand the guidelines on the product label to minimise chances of having a problem once you use the pesticide.

Read keenly

Felix Kabasharira, an agronomist at MTK Uganda which deals in animal drugs and health products, says when selecting pesticides; ensure that you have learnt about the pest, decide how much pest activity you can tolerate and read about the required safety equipment.

Kabasharira, says to reduce risk, choose the product with low toxicity by looking for the word "Caution" on the product.

Farmers should also learn about the pest, to ascertain whether it has been identified properly or not by an expert.

"Look at the pest on the label then

choose a product that is designed with the pest in mind. Usually the pests that the product targets will be listed on the label," says Kabasharira.

Is it a short or long term problem?

Before choosing a pesticide; also consider its effectiveness and value, quality and find out which active ingredients are in the pesticide and the effects it has on the plant.

According to Kabasharira, choosing a pesticide should be determined based on circumstances. If it is an emergency, a shorter-lived, fast acting and more acute toxic material (such as organophosphate



IMPORTANT TO NOTE

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for cockroaches) may be necessary. But a longer lasting, slow acting and less toxic material (such as boric acid) may be better for chronic pest problems.

"It is also important to consider storage of the product; the type of crop, a high value crop requires a good product and the spraying regime, there are pesticides that take

a regime of six months and those that take a week," he added.

Dr William Wogoire, the director of National Coffee Research Institute in Kizuza, Mukono District, says farmers also need to decide how much pest activity they can tolerate because it may not be possible to completely eliminate the pest, but you may be able to keep the population to a bearable level.

Terrain matters

He adds that the treatment area should also be considered because there are areas that are sensitive. Does the area slope towards a vulnerable area such as a stream, garden, well, or playground? Are valuable plants nearby that could be affected by drift?

Dr Wogoire says species specificity is also important as it is especially important to look for before using toxic chemicals since certain pesticides only affect the target animals or plants and try to avoid getting broad spectrum pesticides that have potential to kill or harm many beneficial species along with the pest. Similar situations as that of your school may help in estimating the kind of effect it will have.

He added that one should consider endurance of the animal or plant's endurance to the effects of a pesticide and watch for success in pest control.

Cost matters

When deciding what chemicals to use and that determining cost often is done by measuring Shillings per volume- Dr Wogoire says, some new materials that are effective in lower doses may be more expensive than older pesticides that need larger amounts to do the job.

"A small container of more concentrated material may seem more expensive, but may be as effective as three times that much in another kind of pesticide," said Dr

Wogoire.

Is it legal?

He said it is important to find out whether the product [pesticide] is registered and know the laws regarding its use before buying it.

"Look at the pesticide label again, follow its directions for use, registrations, storage, and disposal to the letter go through the words that signal toxicity levels such as:

• **DANGER**-a taste to a teaspoon taken by mouth could kill an average-

Where to buy pesticides

Kabasharira says there are no agricultural pesticides manufactured or formulated in Uganda. Supplies of imported pesticides come mainly from India, China, Taiwan, Israel, Europe or branch offices of international companies in Kenya.

At MTK, they have Sengielda (for fungal diseases), Volar M7, Pridazin, Supazim, Milor as curative pesticides and that they also have herbicides that kill weeds such as Norwood.

There are a number of wholesalers, who distribute to small scale stockists, mostly in Kampala but also in the interior. Container Village, a section near St Balikuddembe Market (Owino) in Kampala, is home to thriving business for agricultural pesticides and fungicides and other agricultural inputs.

Recommendations

Dr Okasaal Opolot, director of crop resources at ministry of Agriculture, says pesticides types: Striker 247 SC and Rockett 44EC are being used to fight Army worm which has spread across the country. Dr Okasaal revealed some of the recommended pesticides: Acephate [ACE 750 SP], Thiamethoxam 250g/kg [Actara 25 WG], Pirimiphos-methyl [Actellic 2% dust], Iipronil 12.5% ULV [Adonis 12.5 UL], Profenfos 30%+ Lambda-Cyhalothrin 1.5% [Agro-Lambacin Super 315 EC], Dimethoate 40% EC [Agro-Thoate 40% EC], Cypermethrin [Cymbush 25% EC] and Diazinon.

sized adult,



• **WARNING**-a teaspoonful to an ounce taken by mouth could kill an average-sized adult and

• **CAUTION**-an ounce to over a pint taken by mouth could kill an average-sized adult.

• **DIRECTIONS**- "Lastly, consider disposal, please do not put pesticides in toilets, sinks, other drains or gutters. Follow the manufacturer's directions for proper disposal," says Dr Wogoire.

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