**“Grow Safe Food Campaign .”**

Pesticides are critical inputs in agriculture in that they protect crops from depredations from pests and diseases. However, pesticides are toxic substances and are likely to leave behind traces in crops which may be in excess of the Maximum Residue Limits, if applied in an indiscriminate and unapproved manner. Pesticides are therefore subjected to rigorous evaluation at the time of registration and specific conditions for application are clearly spelt out. If the methodology for pesticide application on crops is followed in toto in accordance with the instructions on labels and leaflets of pesticide containers, the likelihood of discovery of pesticide residues in crops above the safe limit become virtually nonexistent.

2. In recent times, reports are being received from some parts of the country regarding indiscriminate use of pesticides in disregard of approved methods of application. As a consequence, residues are being discovered, particularly in crops like fruits, vegetables, spices etc. which are sometimes in breach of the safety limit. Such residues can have a deleterious effect on human health and is therefore, a cause for public concern. The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation has been working in tandem with State Governments, pesticide manufacturers and farmers to create an all round awareness on the need to grow safe food.

3. Pesticide residue levels are being monitored on an all India basis and State Governments are being apprised whenever instances of pesticide over-use come to light. Advisories are being sent to pesticides dealers to build awareness on the importance of instructions on pesticide labels and leaflets for production of safe food and other agricultural produce. Dealers are being exhorted to disseminate this vital message among their farmer customers.

4. A ‘Grow Safe Food’ campaign has been initiated to carry the message of safe and judicious use of pesticides to farmers and other stakeholders. A simple message on the five essential principles of judicious pesticides use - application of pesticides on the right crop, against pests for which the pesticide has been approved, at the right time, in approved doses, and as per approved method of application - is sought to be conveyed through hoardings, banners etc. in regional languages in Gram Panchayats and rural areas. A logo has been developed to signify the importance of the endeavour.