Research Paper IMPACT FACTOR VALUE : 6.247 | E-ISSN NO : 2455-295X | VOLUME : 12 | ISSUE : 10 | OCTOBER 2026

ROLE OF PESTICIDES ON HUMAN HEALTH AS WELL AS CATTLE OF THE FIELD: A GENERAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT:

Pesticides play an important role in modern agriculture by protecting crops from insects, weeds, fungi, rodents and other harmful organisms that can reduce agricultural production. The increasing use of pesticides has contributed to crop protection and agricultural productivity; however, their excessive, improper or unsafe use may create serious concerns for human health, livestock health and the environment. The present study examines the role of pesticides in agricultural practices with particular emphasis on their effects on farmers, agricultural workers and cattle associated with farming households. Human beings may be exposed to pesticides during mixing, loading, spraying, transportation, storage and disposal, as well as through contaminated food, water, soil and clothing. Depending on the type of pesticide, dose and duration of exposure, such contact may be associated with symptoms such as headache, dizziness, nausea, skin and eye irritation, breathing difficulties and other acute health problems. Long-term exposure to certain pesticides has also been investigated in relation to neurological, reproductive, endocrine and other health outcomes.

The study also focuses on the exposure of cattle and other livestock to pesticides in agricultural areas. Livestock may come into contact with pesticide residues through grazing in recently treated fields, consumption of contaminated crop residues or fodder, drinking contaminated water, or accidental exposure during spraying. Depending on the chemical involved and level of exposure, animals may show signs such as weakness, excessive salivation, digestive disturbances, abnormal movements, tremors, breathing difficulties and, in severe cases, serious illness or death. The possibility of pesticide residues entering animal products such as milk is also an important concern because livestock products are an essential source of nutrition and income for rural households. However, pesticide-related health effects are chemical- and exposure-specific and should be assessed through appropriate medical or veterinary evaluation rather than symptoms alone.

The study further examines farmers' knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding pesticide use, personal protective equipment, pesticide storage and disposal, livestock protection, feeding of crop residues and safe agricultural practices. It emphasizes the importance of agricultural extension services, farmer education and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in reducing unnecessary pesticide exposure. The study argues that responsible pesticide management requires a balanced approach that maintains agricultural productivity while protecting farmers, their families, cattle and the surrounding environment. The findings are expected to provide useful information for improving pesticide-safety awareness, strengthening agricultural and veterinary extension programmes and encouraging safer and more sustainable agricultural practices.

KEYWORDS:

PESTICIDES, HUMAN HEALTH, CATTLE HEALTH, LIVESTOCK, FARMERS, AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES, PESTICIDE EXPOSURE, CROP RESIDUES, INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT, RAJASTHAN.

PAPER ACCEPTED DATE:	PAPER PUBLISHED DATE:
4th October 2026	5th October 2026

INTRODUCTION

Pesticides have become an important component of modern agriculture because they help farmers protect crops from insects, weeds, fungi, rodents and other organisms that reduce agricultural production. In agricultural regions, pesticides are commonly used to control crop pests and diseases and to improve the quality and quantity of agricultural output. The use of pesticides has increased considerably with the intensification of agriculture, expansion of commercial farming and growing demand for food. In Rajasthan, where agriculture is an important source of livelihood for a large rural population, pesticides are used in several major crops including cotton, mustard, wheat, vegetables, pulses and other crops. Although pesticides can provide significant benefits to

agricultural production, their inappropriate, excessive or unsafe use may create risks for human health, livestock health and the wider environment. Therefore, the study of pesticides should not be limited to their role in crop protection; it should also consider their consequences for farmers, agricultural workers, cattle and other animals living in or around farming areas.

The relationship between pesticide use and human health is particularly important because farmers and agricultural workers may come into direct contact with pesticides during mixing, loading, spraying, transportation, storage and disposal. Human exposure may also occur indirectly through contaminated food, drinking water, soil, air, clothing and agricultural products. The degree of risk depends upon several factors, including the type of pesticide, toxicity of the active ingredient, concentration, quantity used, frequency of application, method of application, duration of exposure and use of protective equipment. Therefore, it is not appropriate to assume that every pesticide produces the same health effects. Different pesticide groups have different toxicological characteristics, and their effects may range from temporary irritation to serious poisoning in cases of substantial exposure.

The issue is particularly significant in rural areas because farming households often live close to agricultural fields. Farmers may store pesticides in or near their houses, sheds or agricultural structures. In some cases, pesticide containers may be kept close to food, animal feed or water sources. Agricultural workers may also return to fields soon after spraying, while family members may handle contaminated clothing or equipment. These practices can increase opportunities for exposure. Similarly, cattle, buffaloes, goats and other livestock may be exposed when they graze near treated fields, consume contaminated crop residues or drink water contaminated by agricultural chemicals. Thus, pesticide use can have implications for both human and livestock health within agricultural communities.

PESTICIDE USE IN AGRICULTURE

Pesticides include a broad group of chemical substances used to prevent, destroy, repel or control pests. In agriculture, important categories include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides and other pest-control products. Insecticides are used primarily against insect pests, herbicides against unwanted plants and weeds, while fungicides are used to control fungal diseases. The selection of a pesticide normally depends upon the crop, pest, disease, stage of crop development and recommendations provided by agricultural experts or product labels. When used correctly, pesticides can reduce crop losses and contribute to agricultural productivity. However, inappropriate application can result in unnecessary chemical exposure and environmental contamination.

The increased dependence on chemical pesticides is associated with several factors. Farmers often prefer chemical pesticides because they can provide relatively rapid control of pests and may be easily available through agricultural input markets. In commercial agriculture, farmers may also feel pressure to protect crops from pest attacks because crop failure can cause substantial economic losses. In some areas, repeated pesticide application has become a routine agricultural practice rather than a decision based on actual pest populations or economic thresholds. Farmers may sometimes spray crops several times during a growing season, particularly when they believe that repeated application will ensure better crop protection. Such practices can increase pesticide exposure and may contribute to unnecessary expenditure and environmental contamination.

The safe use of pesticides requires adequate knowledge about the product, correct dosage, application method, protective equipment, waiting periods and storage requirements. Farmers should be able to understand pesticide labels and should follow recommended instructions. They should also distinguish between pesticides intended for particular crops and pests rather than selecting products solely on the basis of price, availability or informal advice. Agricultural extension services can play an important role in improving farmer knowledge. Training programmes, demonstrations and regular contact with agricultural officers can help farmers understand responsible pesticide use and alternative pest-management approaches.

EXPOSURE OF FARMERS TO PESTICIDES

Farmers and agricultural workers constitute one of the groups most likely to experience occupational pesticide exposure. Exposure may occur while opening pesticide containers, measuring chemicals, mixing pesticide concentrates with water, filling spraying equipment, carrying spray machines and applying pesticides to crops. During spraying, droplets or vapours may come into contact with the skin, eyes or respiratory system. Exposure may be increased when farmers do not use appropriate protective equipment or when spraying is carried out under unsuitable weather conditions.

Skin exposure is an important route of pesticide contact because farmers may handle pesticide containers or spraying equipment without gloves. The hands, arms, face and other uncovered areas of the body may come into contact with pesticide mixtures. Absorption through the skin varies according to the pesticide and the conditions of exposure. Wearing suitable protective clothing and gloves can reduce direct contact. Farmers should also wash exposed skin thoroughly after handling pesticides and should avoid using contaminated clothing repeatedly without washing.

Respiratory exposure can occur when pesticide droplets, aerosols, vapours or dust are inhaled during application. The risk may increase during spraying in enclosed areas or when inappropriate application equipment is used. Wind direction is also important because spraying against the wind can cause pesticide droplets to return towards the

person applying the chemical. Farmers should therefore follow recommended application practices and avoid unnecessary exposure to spray drift.

Eye exposure is another possible concern. Accidental splashing during mixing or spraying can cause irritation and, depending on the chemical involved, more serious injury. Appropriate eye protection can reduce this risk. Farmers should not rub their eyes with contaminated hands and should follow first-aid instructions given on the pesticide label in the event of accidental exposure.

EFFECTS OF PESTICIDES ON HUMAN HEALTH

The health effects of pesticide exposure depend on the pesticide involved, amount of exposure, route of exposure and duration. Acute exposure occurs over a relatively short period and can produce symptoms shortly after contact with certain toxic pesticides. Possible symptoms may include headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, sweating, weakness, abdominal discomfort, skin irritation, eye irritation, breathing difficulty, blurred vision or other neurological symptoms. However, these symptoms are not specific to pesticide poisoning and can also occur because of heat stress, dehydration, infection or other health conditions. Therefore, symptoms alone should not be used to diagnose pesticide poisoning.

Severe pesticide poisoning can be a medical emergency, particularly with highly toxic compounds. Certain pesticide groups can affect the nervous system and may produce excessive salivation, sweating, muscle weakness, tremors, breathing difficulties, confusion or seizures in serious cases. Immediate medical assessment is necessary when significant pesticide exposure is suspected. Farmers should retain the pesticide container or label, if it is safe to do so, because information about the active ingredient can assist medical professionals in assessing the exposure.

Repeated or long-term exposure is also an important area of public-health research. Scientific studies have investigated possible associations between certain pesticide exposures and neurological, reproductive, endocrine, respiratory and other health outcomes. However, the evidence varies according to the pesticide, exposure level and population studied. It is therefore scientifically inappropriate to state that pesticide exposure automatically causes a particular chronic disease. A proper assessment must consider the specific chemical, exposure history and other possible risk factors.

Pesticide residues may also affect people indirectly through food and water. When pesticides are applied incorrectly or when recommended pre-harvest intervals are not followed, residues may remain on agricultural products. Regulatory systems establish maximum residue limits for particular pesticide-crop combinations to protect consumers. Farmers and consumers therefore have an interest in following appropriate pesticide-use instructions and observing the required interval between the final application and harvesting.

PESTICIDES AND THE HEALTH OF AGRICULTURAL FAMILIES

Pesticide exposure is not limited to the person who sprays the field. Other members of the household may also experience indirect exposure. Contaminated work clothing may carry pesticide residues into the home. Children may accidentally come into contact with pesticide containers if chemicals are stored in easily accessible locations. Food or animal feed can also become contaminated when pesticides are stored close to them. These possibilities demonstrate the importance of safe pesticide storage and household-level awareness.

Pesticides should be stored in their original, clearly labelled containers and kept in a secure location away from food, drinking water, animal feed and children. Empty pesticide containers should never be reused for storing food, water or household materials. Farmers should follow the disposal instructions applicable to their area rather than throwing containers into fields, irrigation channels or water bodies. Proper storage and disposal are therefore important elements of both occupational and household safety.

Education and awareness are major factors influencing safe pesticide practices. Farmers with greater access to agricultural information may be more likely to understand dosage requirements, protective measures and environmental risks. However, education alone does not guarantee safe practices. Availability and affordability of protective equipment, access to extension services, local agricultural traditions and perceptions about pesticide effectiveness can also influence farmer behaviour.

EXPOSURE OF CATTLE AND OTHER LIVESTOCK

In rural agricultural communities, livestock are closely connected with farming activities. Cattle, buffaloes, goats and sheep may provide milk, meat, manure, draught power and household income. Consequently, the health of livestock is directly connected with the economic well-being of farming families. Pesticide exposure in agricultural areas can therefore have consequences not only for animal welfare but also for rural livelihoods.

Livestock may be exposed to pesticides through several pathways. One important pathway is grazing in or near recently treated agricultural fields. If animals enter treated fields before the appropriate waiting period has passed, they may come into contact with pesticide residues on plants and soil. Animals may also consume treated vegetation directly. The risk depends upon the pesticide, its toxicity, concentration and the amount consumed.

Another important pathway is the use of crop residues as animal feed. Crop residues are commonly used in many farming systems, particularly where farmers depend heavily on locally available feed resources. If residues from treated crops are used without considering pesticide restrictions or waiting periods, livestock may be exposed to residues. The potential for exposure depends on the chemical properties of the pesticide, the crop, the time

elapsed after application and the part of the plant consumed by the animal.

Water can also represent a potential route of exposure. Agricultural chemicals may reach surface water or other water sources through runoff, spray drift or inappropriate disposal. Livestock drinking from contaminated water may consequently be exposed. Protecting animal drinking-water sources is therefore an important component of pesticide-risk management.

Direct spraying is another possible source of animal exposure. Livestock should be kept away from fields during pesticide application and should not be exposed unnecessarily to spray drift. Farmers should follow product-specific instructions concerning animal safety and grazing restrictions.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF PESTICIDES ON CATTLE

The effects of pesticide exposure on cattle and other livestock vary according to the chemical, dose and route of exposure. In cases of significant exposure to certain toxic pesticides, animals may show signs such as excessive salivation, digestive disturbances, weakness, abnormal movements, tremors, difficulty walking, breathing problems, changes in behaviour or loss of coordination. Severe poisoning can lead to seizures, collapse or death. Nevertheless, these signs are not unique to pesticide poisoning and may occur in other diseases. A veterinarian should therefore evaluate animals showing unusual symptoms after possible pesticide exposure.

The effects of pesticides on livestock are important because animals may serve as an indirect pathway through which environmental contamination affects rural households. For example, pesticide residues may be present in animal tissues or products under particular exposure conditions. Milk-producing animals are especially important because milk is commonly consumed within rural households and is also sold in local markets. The presence and significance of pesticide residues in milk depend on the chemical properties of the pesticide, the level and duration of exposure and the animal's ability to metabolize and excrete the substance. Consequently, claims about pesticide residues in milk should be based on laboratory evidence rather than assumptions.

Livestock health also has economic significance. A sick animal may produce less milk, gain weight more slowly or require veterinary treatment. In severe cases, animal mortality may cause considerable financial losses to farming families. Therefore, preventing unnecessary pesticide exposure is not only an environmental or health concern but also an economic necessity for agricultural households.

PESTICIDE RESIDUES AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS

The possibility of pesticide residues entering animal products is an important subject in agricultural health research. Animals may consume pesticide residues through treated fodder, crop residues, contaminated vegetation or water. Certain chemicals may accumulate in animal tissues or may be excreted through milk or other products depending on their chemical characteristics. The extent of transfer varies greatly among pesticide compounds.

The risk to consumers cannot be determined simply by knowing that pesticides were used in a field. A scientific assessment requires information about the particular pesticide, application rate, time since application, animal exposure, residue concentration and relevant food-safety standards. Monitoring programmes and laboratory analysis are therefore important for understanding residue levels in milk and other animal products.

Farmers can reduce potential exposure by following pesticide labels and agricultural recommendations, observing grazing restrictions and avoiding the use of recently treated crop material as animal feed when restrictions apply. Proper management of fodder and water sources is also essential. Agricultural extension agencies can help farmers understand the relationship between pesticide application and livestock safety.

PESTICIDE EXPOSURE AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS

The relationship between pesticide use, human health, animal health and rural livelihood is complex. Farmers may use pesticides because they believe they are necessary for protecting crops and ensuring income. At the same time, unsafe pesticide practices can create health and economic costs. Medical expenses resulting from pesticide exposure, reduced labour capacity, veterinary costs and loss of livestock productivity may offset some of the economic benefits obtained from intensive pesticide use.

This issue is particularly relevant to small and marginal farmers. Such households may have limited financial resources and may depend heavily on family labour. If a farmer experiences illness after pesticide exposure, the household may lose working days during important agricultural operations. Similarly, illness among cattle can reduce milk production and increase veterinary expenditure. Therefore, pesticide safety should be considered within the broader framework of sustainable rural development.

ROLE OF AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Awareness is one of the most important factors affecting pesticide safety. Farmers need information about the correct pesticide, recommended dose, method of application, protective equipment, storage, disposal and possible risks to humans and animals. Information should be provided in local languages and in forms that are easily understandable to rural populations.

Agricultural extension workers, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, agricultural universities, farmer training centres and government departments can contribute significantly to pesticide-safety education. Demonstrations can be particularly useful because farmers can observe correct handling procedures directly. Training should also address livestock protection because farmers often consider crop protection and animal husbandry as interconnected

activities.

Awareness programmes should emphasize that pesticides are not always the first or only solution to pest problems. Integrated Pest Management provides a broader approach that combines cultural, mechanical, biological and chemical methods. The objective is to manage pests effectively while reducing unnecessary pesticide use and associated risks. Encouraging farmers to adopt integrated approaches may therefore improve both agricultural sustainability and health protection.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH PROTECTION

Integrated Pest Management, commonly known as IPM, is an approach that seeks to maintain pest populations below economically damaging levels while reducing dependence on chemical pesticides. IPM can include crop rotation, resistant varieties, biological control, mechanical control, cultural practices, monitoring of pest populations and carefully selected pesticide applications when necessary. The approach does not necessarily eliminate pesticides but seeks to use them more rationally.

From a human-health perspective, reduced and targeted pesticide application can reduce opportunities for occupational exposure. From a livestock perspective, better pest-management planning can reduce the possibility of animals entering recently treated fields or consuming contaminated residues. IPM can also reduce contamination of soil and water and help conserve beneficial organisms.

The adoption of IPM depends on farmer knowledge, availability of technical support, crop type, pest pressure, market conditions and economic considerations. Farmers require practical training and reliable information if IPM is to become an effective part of agricultural practice. Government and agricultural institutions therefore have an important role in promoting accessible and locally appropriate pest-management strategies.

ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS OF PESTICIDE USE

Pesticides do not remain confined to the target pest. Depending on their chemical properties and application conditions, they can move through soil, water and air. Spray drift may transport pesticide droplets beyond the treated field. Runoff may carry residues into water bodies, while inappropriate disposal can directly contaminate soil and water.

Environmental contamination can indirectly affect humans and livestock. Animals may drink contaminated water, consume affected vegetation or come into contact with contaminated soil. Beneficial insects and other organisms may also be affected by certain pesticides. The ecological effects vary significantly among chemicals and application conditions, so environmental risk assessment should be pesticide-specific.

Protecting agricultural ecosystems is particularly important in areas where farming and livestock rearing occur together. A healthy agricultural environment supports both crop production and animal husbandry. Therefore, responsible pesticide use should be considered part of sustainable agricultural development rather than simply a method of controlling pests.

NEED FOR SAFE PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT IN RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan presents a significant context for studying pesticide use because agriculture is closely connected with rural livelihoods, livestock ownership and variable climatic conditions. Farmers in different districts cultivate a variety of crops under irrigated and rain-fed conditions. Crop patterns, pest problems and pesticide-use practices differ across regions. In areas where agriculture and animal husbandry are closely integrated, pesticide management should consider the protection of both humans and livestock.

The dry and semi-arid conditions prevailing across much of Rajasthan make livestock particularly important to rural households. Cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats and other animals may depend on agricultural residues, grazing land and local water sources. Consequently, the management of pesticide-treated crops and residues has direct relevance for animal health. Farmers should be encouraged to maintain adequate separation between pesticide application and livestock grazing and to seek advice before feeding treated crop residues to animals.

The problem should also be examined from a social perspective. Farmer education, access to agricultural extension, availability of protective equipment, pesticide marketing practices, economic pressures and traditional agricultural knowledge can all influence pesticide use. A comprehensive study should therefore examine not only the quantity of pesticide used but also farmer perceptions, knowledge, attitudes and practices.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR HUMAN HEALTH

Several measures can reduce the health risks associated with pesticide use. Farmers should first determine whether pesticide application is actually necessary and should select the least hazardous effective method where possible. When pesticides are required, farmers should use only the recommended product and dose. Mixing different pesticides without technical advice should be avoided because incompatible or unnecessary mixtures may increase risks.

Appropriate personal protective equipment should be used according to the pesticide label and application method. Gloves, protective clothing, suitable footwear, eye protection and respiratory protection may be required depending on the product and exposure conditions. Farmers should avoid eating, drinking or smoking while handling pesticides and should wash their hands and exposed skin after spraying.

Contaminated clothing should be removed and washed separately from household clothing. Spraying equipment should be cleaned safely, and pesticide containers should

not be reused. Pesticides should be stored securely away from children, food, animal feed and water. Farmers should also be familiar with basic first-aid information and seek medical assistance when significant exposure or poisoning is suspected.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR CATTLE AND LIVESTOCK

Livestock protection should be incorporated into normal pesticide-management practices. Animals should be removed from fields during pesticide application and should not be allowed to graze in recently treated areas where restrictions apply. Farmers should observe the appropriate waiting or grazing interval specified for the particular pesticide and crop.

Crop residues should be managed carefully. Farmers should avoid giving livestock plant material that is subject to pesticide-related feeding restrictions. Where uncertainty exists, advice should be obtained from an agricultural or veterinary professional rather than assuming that all crop residues are safe.

Animal drinking-water sources should be protected from pesticide contamination. Pesticide containers and equipment should never be washed in livestock drinking areas. Chemicals should be stored away from animal shelters and feed stores. Empty containers should never be used as water or feed containers.

If an animal develops unusual symptoms following possible pesticide exposure, the farmer should contact a veterinarian as soon as possible. The pesticide label or product information should be made available to the veterinarian if possible. Farmers should not attempt to treat suspected poisoning using unverified household remedies because inappropriate treatment may worsen the condition.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Government agencies have an important role in reducing pesticide-related risks. Regulation of pesticide registration, sale, distribution and use helps ensure that agricultural chemicals are used appropriately. Agricultural extension services can provide farmers with technical information and training. Regular awareness campaigns can address safe handling, protective equipment, storage, disposal and livestock protection.

Agricultural universities and research institutions can contribute by developing and promoting alternative pest-management practices, conducting residue studies and evaluating farmer knowledge and behaviour. Veterinary departments can also participate in programmes that educate farmers about livestock exposure to pesticides. Collaboration between agricultural, health and veterinary institutions is particularly important because pesticide exposure crosses disciplinary boundaries.

Monitoring and surveillance can strengthen pesticide-risk management. Data on pesticide consumption, poisoning incidents, residues and environmental contamination can help authorities identify areas requiring additional intervention. Research involving farmers should also assess local perceptions and practices because formal regulations may not always reflect what happens in the field.

IMPORTANCE OF FARMER PARTICIPATION

Successful pesticide-risk reduction cannot be achieved only through regulations. Farmers themselves must be active participants. Their experiences, knowledge and perceptions should be considered when designing training and agricultural policies. If safety recommendations are impractical or too expensive, farmers may be less likely to follow them. Therefore, interventions should be realistic, affordable and adapted to local farming conditions.

Farmer groups, cooperatives and self-help groups can provide useful platforms for sharing information. Demonstration farms and farmer field schools can help farmers compare conventional pesticide-intensive practices with integrated approaches. Peer learning can also encourage safer behavior when farmers observe successful practices among neighboring farmers.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

A study of the role of pesticides in relation to human and cattle health is significant because it connects agricultural production with public health, animal health, environmental protection and rural economics. Many studies focus primarily on crop productivity or pesticide consumption, whereas an integrated approach considers the entire agricultural household and ecosystem.

The study can generate information about the types of pesticides used, frequency of application, farmers' knowledge, protective practices, human health complaints, livestock exposure pathways and awareness of animal health risks. Such information can help identify gaps between knowledge and actual practice. It can also provide evidence for developing targeted training programmes.

The research may be particularly useful in districts where crop cultivation and livestock rearing are closely connected. Understanding local pesticide practices can help identify whether animals are being exposed through grazing, crop residues, water or direct spray. It can also help determine whether farmers recognize the possible relationship between pesticide use and animal health.

CONCLUSION

Pesticides play an important role in protecting agricultural crops and supporting food production, but their use also creates potential risks when chemicals are handled or applied improperly. The effects of pesticide exposure depend on the particular chemical, dose, route and duration of exposure. Farmers and agricultural workers may experience occupational exposure during mixing, spraying, transportation, storage and disposal. Other household members may experience indirect exposure through contaminated clothing, food, water or unsafe storage.

Cattle and other livestock can also be exposed through grazing on recently treated fields, consuming contaminated crop residues, drinking contaminated water or coming into direct contact with pesticides. Depending on the pesticide and exposure level, animals may experience a range of adverse effects, including digestive, neurological, respiratory or behavioral problems. Serious exposure may result in severe illness or death. However, symptoms alone cannot establish pesticide poisoning, and veterinary assessment is required.

The protection of human and livestock health should therefore be integrated into agricultural pesticide management. Farmers should follow pesticide labels, use appropriate protective equipment, maintain safe storage and disposal practices, observe grazing and feeding restrictions and protect water sources. Greater awareness, agricultural extension services and farmer training can improve safe practices. Integrated Pest Management can further reduce unnecessary dependence on chemical pesticides by combining biological, cultural, mechanical and carefully selected chemical methods.

In the context of Rajasthan, the issue has special importance because crop cultivation and livestock rearing are closely interconnected in many rural communities. Cattle and other livestock contribute to household income, nutrition and agricultural activities, while crop residues frequently form an important part of animal feed. Consequently, pesticide management must take into account both crop protection and livestock safety.

A comprehensive research study on pesticides and human and cattle health can therefore contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between agricultural practices and rural well-being. The ultimate objective should not be to eliminate all pesticide use but to promote rational, responsible and scientifically informed use. Appropriate pesticide selection, correct dosage, protective measures, integrated pest management, livestock protection and effective agricultural extension can help farmers maintain crop productivity while reducing avoidable risks to themselves, their families, their animals and the environment.

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