

Abstract

An assessment of knowledge and skills of agro-shop owners/operators in the East West corridor and the central districts was done in the form of a survey. The survey was in the form of a questionnaire which contained forty four questions (44) and approximately twenty eight (28) agro-shops were surveyed. The questionnaires of forty four (44) questions were further divided in to six (6) sub-sections; level of education, pest identification, pesticide recommendation, weed control, environmental concerns and safety practices.

It was observed that most of the agro-shops owners/operators that were surveyed didn't have any formal training and experience in five (5) out of the six (6) sub-sections in the questionnaire; pest identification, pesticide recommendation, weed control and environmental concerns. The agro-shops owners/operators generally have very good knowledge on the safety practices when it comes to spillage of chemicals in their shops.

From the results it was concluded that agro-shops owners/operators need to be trained in courses of pesticides especially in biological/natural pesticides, new pesticides/chemicals and proper disposal. At the end this training agro-shop owners/operators should be confident and able to advise the farmers properly on pesticides, weed control, safety practices etc. This would result in farmers being able to make informed decisions regarding pesticides application to crops i.e. best time to apply and required amount resulting in less pesticide escaping into the environment, providing a safer and healthier produce for the public.