

ANTI-COUNTERFEITING ACTIVITIES PROTECT INNOVATION, HUMAN HEALTH, FARMER LIVELIHOODS & BIODIVERSITY

Counterfeit and illegal pesticides are a growing problem the agriculture sector, posing a serious risk to farmers, the environment, and economies. These illegal products also have the potential to stall and undermine innovations from the plant science industry.

CropLife International members undertake rigorous testing and regulation of any new products to ensure they are safe for farmers and the environment. In a well-regulated market, crops treated with illegal pesticides stop at the farm gate.

THREATS FROM ILLEGAL PESTICIDES



ENVIRONMENT: Counterfeit and illegal pesticides, often with unknown ingredients, are **not tested** for environmental safety, while **legal pesticides** are **extensively tested** to prove they are **safe** for wildlife and the environment before they are approved by regulatory authorities.



HEALTH: Illegal pesticides pose a **risk to the health** of farm workers during the application of the product, and medical treatment when exposed to **unknown chemicals** can be problematic for medical professionals and poison information centers.



ECONOMY: Counterfeit pesticides disrupt **investment, employment, innovation, and tax revenues**. If a region or country is known for using counterfeit pesticides, it may become difficult for them to export their crops, putting both their reputation and **economic security at risk**.



REGULATORY: Anecdotal evidence shows that banning pesticides does not remove their availability, but rather creates an **illegal black market** for the **banned pesticide**, especially where governance to manage the ban is weak, providing **organized crime** an opportunity to sell **dangerous, untested illegal** banned pesticides to farmers.



FARMER LIVELIHOODS: The use of **illegal pesticides** could cause **economic ruin** for the farmer and potential **loss of harvest** due to the use of an ineffective or **damaging counterfeit product**.

COUNTERFEIT PESTICIDES BY THE NUMBERS

GLOBALLY

The OECD puts the global revenues associated with the trade in illegal pesticides at between **\$6-10 billion**, making the trade in illegal pesticides one of the leading organized crime activities in the world.¹

EUROPE

The European Union Intellectual Property Office estimates that illegal pesticides now account for **14%** of the European market, one of the most heavily regulated markets in the world.²

ASIA

A Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry report states that illegal pesticides constitute approximately **25%** of the value of the total domestic market of agrochemicals in India.⁵

LATIN AMERICA

An estimated **25%** of the **\$15 billion** pesticide market in Brazil is comprised of illegal pesticides, according to a study by the Institute for Economic and Social Development of Borders.³

AFRICA

In 2019, unregistered pesticides in Mali accounted for **26%** of total pesticide volumes sold. This number aligns with earlier estimates of broad averages across West Africa.⁴

ACTIVITY ACROSS THE CROPLIFE GLOBAL NETWORK

Given the many negative consequences of counterfeit and illegal pesticides, CropLife International partners with stakeholders such as the OECD, UN, FAO, Interpol, Europol, the World Customs Organization, and national police and customs officers to enforce intellectual property rights and ensure only legal authentic crop protection products are traded, sold, and used. Successful activities to date include awareness raising campaigns, customs agent trainings, and collaborating with law enforcement, resulting in seizures of illegal pesticides and arrests of counterfeiters.

EUROPE (EU)

IN 2022, OPERATION SILVER AXE VII SEIZED **1,150 tonnes** of **illegal pesticides** across in Europe, bringing the total amount of illegal pesticides seized under Silver Axe to **4,921 tonnes**.

Silver Axe, coordinated by **Europol**, brings together member states, the **EU Intellectual Property Office**, the **European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)**, the **European Commission**, **CropLife Europe**, and **CropLife International** in a concerted effort to curtail counterfeit and illegal pesticides.

Notably, in 2022, **six countries** outside of the EU participated, marking an opportunity to expand this successful method to other regions.



ASIA (INDIA)

CROPLIFE INDIA LAUNCHED A **“Know Your Supplier”** campaign to equip farmers with **practical knowledge** and steps they can take to ensure they are purchasing **authorized products**. A training film available in **eight languages** has helped spread these messages farmers across country.

In addition to farmer awareness efforts, **CropLife India**, **CropLife Asia**, and **CropLife International** regularly work with law enforcement and government authorities to help eliminate the availability of **illegal** and **counterfeit pesticides**, leading to a higher awareness and priority of the issue within the government.



LATAM (BRAZIL)

CROPLIFE BRAZIL'S **“Agriculturist of Value”** campaign on the risk of illegal products has been viewed more than **9 million** times since its launch in 2021.

CropLife Brazil works with police, public security agents, and local authorities to seize and destroy illegal pesticides.

In 2022, **423,000 kilograms** of **illegal pesticides** were incinerated after being seized by police.

Paraquat became the top smuggled product in 2022 after it was banned in 2021.⁶



AFRICA (KENYA)

UNDER THE SUSTAINABLE PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (SPMF), a **multi-year, multi-country program** that launched in 2021 in Kenya, **CropLife International** and **CropLife Kenya** trained **41 customs officials** in the port of Mombasa to identify illegal pesticides smuggled via vessels.

Training farmers to identify **counterfeit pesticides** is one of the core elements of CropLife International's anti-counterfeit strategy.



Sources

1. OECD, [Joint Working Party on Trade and Environment: New digital technologies to tackle trade in illegal pesticides](#), 2020, p. 12.
2. EUIPO-EUROPOL, [Intellectual Property Crime Threat Assessment](#), 2022, p. 20.
3. IDESF, [The Illegal Market for Agricultural Pesticides in Brazil](#), 2021, p. 49.
4. Agricultural Economics, [Unregistered pesticides: Prevalence, risks, and responses in Mali](#), 2023, p. 6.
5. FICCI, [Study on Sub-Standard, Spurious/Counterfeit Pesticides in India 2015 - Report](#), 2015, p. 17.
6. Reuters, [Brazil set to seize massive volumes of illegal pesticides this year, says govt official](#), 25 August 2022.