

NANO UREA FAST-TRACKED WITH INCOMPLETE TRIALS

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: E-technology in the aid of farmers

IFFCO has said farmer field trials were done over four seasons on 94 crops across 21 States since 2019. Trials were continued during Kharif 2021-22 too in all the agro-climatic regions. Various combinations of nitrogen that were made available to plants were evaluated and the resulting yield compared. Overall yields from applying nano urea increased average yield by 7% compared to traditional practices deployed by farmers. When tested in fields that employed organic farming practices (no chemical fertilizers, save the nano urea) the yields jumped 11%.

The Hindu reached out to IFFCO for comments but hasn't received a response until publication.

One plant agronomist, who works for the Agriculture Ministry, told *The Hindu* that the process for approving a new fertilizer significantly depended on ICAR's field observations. It usually tested a product on approved research stations for at least three crop seasons. In the case of nano-urea, this evaluation was only for a two crop seasons.

A senior scientist privy to trial results said that while the practice was to gather trial data over three seasons before forwarding a recommendation, IFFCO had already conducted well designed trials including in farmer fields and Krishi Vikas Kendra research stations. "While company has claimed yield increases of even 25%, we didn't observe that. But we do see that urea is being saved," he said. When asked why a season's worth of data required was waived, "In our stations we saw some cases of yield increase by 3-8% but this wasn't significant on its own as anything from rain or climate could influence results," he added.

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