

## AP, Telangana chilli farmers face threats from invasive pests

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**Hyderabad:** The Rashtriya Kisan Progressive Association (RKPA) has asked the chilli growers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to unite and jointly fight regulators that are blocking quality agri-input and advocate the usage of modern agri-tech practices to tackle invasive pests like ‘Thripsparvispinus’.

The RKPA has also appealed to the Chief Ministers, and administrators of the two Telugu states to set up a committee and a quick response team to save farmers even as the Association itself launched a mass campaign to educate and engage public representative, anti-technology and anti-development forces.



The new invasive pest, ‘Thripsparvispinus’ has severely impacted the red chilli crop in certain districts of the two states by affecting the plants at the flowering stage and stunting their growth. Heavy rains in the recent months have further compounded the problem.

With farmers worried that the crop yield might take a hit due to the pest, RKPA, a consortium of national progressive farmers’ organisations with reach across 16 state and 1.37 lakh farmer members, said: “Solution lies in the use of the right agri-inputs like seeds, fertilizer and appropriate pesticides in suitable quantities.”

Farmers are facing twin problems of spurious pesticides, as well as a lack of awareness regarding proper usage of agrochemicals.

“Besides the quality and right quantity, the timing of applying pesticide is also key for proper growth of the crop and tackle Thrips parvispinus. Use of modern technologies, including drones, robotics, and AI will help in uniform spraying of pesticides,” said the RKPA.

Andhra Pradesh (43.5 per cent) and Telangana (23.5 per cent) account for over 67 per cent of the country’s chilli production, according to RKPA estimates.

The problem of the new pest was noticed in early 2020 and has flared up since October 2021 with both adults and young ones feeding on the ovaries of the flowers and making them unfit for fruiting, and causing heavy flower drop and losses.

“Due to these concerns, the chilli prices in the past two to three weeks have soared by over 30 per cent across various markets in Telangana and Guntur,” the RKPA, adding: “There is a strong need to control Thrips, which feed on the lower surface of leaves of red chillies and are mainly responsible for leaf curl disease. These pests, if not controlled, can reduce the yield by 30 to 50 per cent resulting in great loss to growers.”

**Source:** <https://telanganatoday.com/ap-telangana-chilli-farmers-face-threats-from-invasive-pests>