

Non-fumigated wheat

Why in news?

 $n\n$

From March 31, 2017, the wheat imports to India must be **fumigated with methyl bromide** at the port of origin, else, the cargo would be disallowed from entering Indian shores.

 $n\n$

What is fumigation?

 $n\n$

\n

• Fumigation is a **method of pest control** that completely fills an area with gaseous pesticides (or fumigants) that suffocates or poisons the pests within.

\n

- It is mainly used to control pests in buildings (structural fumigation), soil, grain, and produce.
- It is also used during processing of goods to be imported or exported to prevent transfer of exotic organisms.

 $n\n$

Why is India insisting on fumigation?

 $n\n$

\n

- Substitution is a costly proposition and a tricky one in colder climates. $\ensuremath{^{\backslash n}}$
- Instead of methyl bromide, aluminium phosphide can be used as a fumigant.

\n

• But what can be done in 16 hours with methyl bromide takes three days

with aluminium phosphide and the cost also increases three times. $\$

 $n\n$

What is the plant quarantine order?

 $n\n$

\n

• The Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 2003 has a stipulation that all imports of agricultural produce be fumigated with methyl bromide.

\n

- However, the developed nations are agitated over this stipulation.
- The reason being Methyl bromide is forbidden in developed nations, and its use was restricted by the Montreal Protocol due to its role in ozone depletion.

\n

- In the past, if fumigation is not done at the port of origin, the consignments cane be fumigated at Indian ports on paying a penalty of around of \$375 per tonne against the normal fee of \$75 per tonne.
- But, from March 31, fumigation will have to be done only at the port of origin.

\n

 $n\n$

What is the recent issue?

 $n\$

\n

- Some global companies, in collusion with importers, are forging the certificates showing ships were fumigated.
- This could lead to tonnes of non-fumigated wheat entering India among imports over 5.5 million tonnes in 2016-17.
- To avoid paying \$375 per tonne, some importers showed wheat consignments were fumigated en route.

 $n\n$

What is government's response?

 $n\n$

\n

- \bullet The new rules from March 31 could permit some relaxations, given that imports have already been contracted. $\$
- In the meantime, India could allow import of wheat from countries till the time it analyses pest risk control reports sent by them.
- The Press Trust of India recently said that the government was considering relaxing rules related to fumigating pulses imported from Canada.

\n

 $n\n$

 $n\n$

Source: Business Line

\n

