Occupational exposure to pesticides and resultant health problems were assessed among 318 randomly selected cotton farmers from the two districts of Punjab, Pakistan. Heavy dependence of farmers on pesticides for pest control was reported. A large part (23.3 %) of the pesticides belonged to the category highly hazardous, whereas the largest part (54.7 %) belonged to the category moderately hazardous. Some of them (8 %) were reported to be used on vegetables. Common working practices of high exposure risk were: the confrontation of pesticide spills in the stage of spray solution preparation (76.4 %), the use of low-technology and faulty sprayers (67.9 %), and spraying under inappropriate weather (46.5 %). A large proportion (34 %) of the farmers reported multiple intoxication symptoms by pesticide use; the most common were irritation of skin and eyes, headache, and dizziness. Nevertheless, most farmers thought these symptoms were usual; only few reported visiting the doctor. Findings clearly indicated a high level of risk exposure to pesticides among farmers of the study area, calling upon immediate interventions toward increasing awareness about alternative pest control practices with less pesticide use.