

[3 December, 1999]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) Since import of sugar is on OGL private traders of corporate entities whether in the private or public sector are free to import sugar based on their best commercial judgement. Government does not monitor individual imports. There has been no import of sugar on Government account during the financial years 1997-98 and 1998-99.

(d) Imports of sugar are not free and it is subjected to payment of import duty of 25% plus 10% surcharge and countervailing duty of Rs. 850/- per tonne.

Import of Wheat

†415. SHRI BARJINDER SINGH HAMDARD:

SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that wheat is being imported by the country in large quantities;
- (b) if so, the total quantity of wheat imported during 1998 and till September, 1999;
- (c) whether the wheat importing flour mills have requested Government to bring down sale price of wheat by Food Corporation of India;
- (d) if so, the decision taken by Government in this regard; and
- (e) what was the total stock of wheat in the godowns of the Corporation in September, 1999, alongwith the quantity which was above the buffer stock?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) As per the EXIM Policy, import of wheat is canalised through the Food Corporation of India. However, in order augment the domestic availability of wheat, Roller Flour Mills were allowed with effect from 13.12.1996 to freely import wheat to meet their own requirement on actual user condition for milling purposes and sale of the resultant flour in the domestic market after registering their import contracts with Agricultural and Processed Food Product Export Development Authority (APEDA). With effect from 05.10.1998 Roller Flour Mills can freely import wheat either directly or through State Trading Corporation of India, Project Equipment Corporation and Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation of India and the flour produced out of imported wheat can be sold in the domestic market or be exported. The importers are required only to inform the details of imports and exports to APEDA.

No separate details of imports by FCI and Roller Flour Mills are maintained by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Calcutta. However, 14.15 lakh tonnes of wheat was imported during 1998-99 on government account. There was no import of wheat on Government account during 1999-2000, so far.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(c) & (d) The Confederation of Flour Mills of Southern States had made a request to reduce the existing prices of wheat under Food Corporation of India's (FCI) Open Market Sales Scheme (Domestic) (OMSS) (D) Government have decided to reduce the issue price of wheat under OMSS (D) with effect from December 3, 1999.

(e) As on September 30, 1999 there was 204.05 lakh tonnes of wheat in the Central Pool maintained by the Food Corporation of India. This was 88.05 lakh tonnes in excess of the buffer stock of 116.00 lakh tonnes required to be maintained as on 01.10.1999, as per the buffer stock norms.

Rice and Wheat for Cyclone affected Orissa

416. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a need to release adequate quantum of rice and wheat for the cyclone affected areas of Orissa; and

(b) if so, the details of steps taken by the Central Government in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Central Government has made special allocation of 2,19,540 tonnes of rice and 50,000 tonnes of wheat to the Government of Orissa at Central Issue Prices applicable for Below Poverty Line (BPL) families for distribution to cyclone affected people of 14 districts in Orissa. This is to enable the Orissa Government to distribute 20 kg of foodgrains per family per month to all affected families in the 14 districts of the State for a period of five months from November, 1999 till March, 2000 without discriminating between BPL and APL families.

Out of 2,19,540 tonnes of rice, 2,000 tonnes rice has been allocated to the State Government for use by NGOs of repute and Central PSUs to run community kitchens in Orissa for cyclone affected people.

The special allocation is in addition to the regular monthly allotment of rice and wheat being given to the State under Targeted Public Distribution System.

Import duty on Sugar

417. SHRI RAJUBHAIA. PARMAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite surplus stocks of sugar during the current year, Government failed to impose any restrictive import duty on sugar;

(b) if so, the quantum of sugar imported during the year; and

(c) how it affected the Indian sugar industry?