

(c) & (d) As per the EXIM policy, import of wheat is canalised through the food Corporation of India. However, in order to 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 Products Export Development Authority (APEDA). with effect form 5.10.1998 Roller Flour Mills can freely import wheat either directly or through State Trading Corporation of India (STC), Project Equipment Corporation and Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation of India (MMTC). 14.15 lakh MTs of wheat was imported on Government account during 1998-99. There was no import of wheat on Government account during the current year (i.e. 1999-2000) so far.

Excess Procurement and Import of Wheat

1688. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recommended wheat buffer stock is 40 lac tone;

(b) how much stock was there in July and in October, 1999;

(c) whether it is a fact that it costs approximately Rs. 1596 to store one ton of wheat in one year; and

(d) whether it is a fact that Government are losing Rs. 1400 crores a year as a result of excess procurement and imports, as reported in the Indian Express of 25th November, 1999?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. the recommended wheat buffer stock for 1st April is 40 lakh tonnes.

(b) The stocks of rice and wheat in Central Pool in July 1999 and October 1999 were as under:

(in lakh tonnes)

As on	Rice	Wheat	Total
1st July, 1999	107.35	216.35	323.70
1st Oct., 1999	88.18	204.05	292.23

(c) Yes, Sir . For storing one tonne of wheat for one year in 1999-2000, the carrying cost is estimated to be around Rs. 1595.

(d) The excess stock of wheat as on 31st October, 1999, over buffer stock level was 90 lakh tonnes (approx) and the carrying cost of this quantity works out to Rs. 1436 Crores (approx.) for one year. In order to reduce the stock level, the Government has allowed sale of wheat in open at fixed prices.

During October, 1999, FCI has issued approx. 3.77 lakh tonnes under this scheme. As it is lean season for wheat the sales are likely to pick up. There has been no import of wheat on Government account during the Current year (1999-2000) so far. Since stock position of foodgrains in the Central Pool is comfortable at present, there is no proposal to import wheat on Government account.

Outflow of Foreign Exchange on Wheat Import

1689. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even though we have enough stock of wheat, the process of imports is continuing unabated;

(b) what steps are being taken to stop these imports;

(c) what has been the total outflow of foreign exchange for import of wheat, so far;

(d) whether it is a fact that Food Corporation of India is having problem for storage of wheat; and

(e) if so, the action taken to rectify the system?