

Restrictions on Export of Rice

1902. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs has sought quantitative restrictions on export of rice;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken to ensure buffer norms before export of rice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) The Export-Import (EXIM) Policy on Agricultural products, including rice is decided by the Ministry of Commerce in consultation with various Ministries/Departments concerned including the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs. Review of EXIM Policy is an on-going process and accordingly Policy interventions are made as and when considered necessary keeping the interest of domestic products consumers and industry in view. As per the current EXIM Policy export of rice (both basmati and non-basmati) is free subject to registration of contracts with Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority (APEDA).

(c) As regard export of foodgrains (wheat and rice) from Central Pool. Government constantly reviews the stock position of foodgrains in the Central Pool vis-a-vis prescribed minimum buffer norms production of foodgrains in the country, trend of procurement, requirement of Public Distribution System other Welfare Schemes, open market prices etc., and decision for export is taken only if foodgrains stocks in the Central Pool are in excess of the prescribed buffer norms. The stock position of rice and wheat in the Central Pool continues to be above the prescribed buffer norms. No export of rice from the Central Pool has been allowed during the current year or the previous year.

Bringing Down the Mustard Oil prices

1903. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the failure of the Ministry to bring down the price of mustard oil, to the level that existed before dropsy deaths last year;

(b) whether the cost of production of mustard oil is almost similar to that in the last year, if so, the reasons for the Ministry not taking necessary steps to keep price at par with the cost production;

(c) whether this is allowing the profiteers and hoarders of mustard oil to loot the consumers; and

(d) if so, by when he would change the policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) In 1998, the prices of mustard oil started rising from June-July, 1998 itself and continued their upward trend till October, 1998. From November, 1998 the prices of mustard oil have started declining. The average monthly wholesale price of mustard oil is given in the Statement (*See* below). The reason for the rise in prices of mustard oil compared to the previous year, was due to the shortfall of 20 lakh MT in mustard seed production compared to 1996-97. After the dropsy incidents in August, 1998, the sale of loose mustard oil was banned in Delhi and several other States which led to decrease in availability at the retail level along with higher price. Government made all efforts to bring the situation back to normal. Other soft oils like soyabean and sunflower oils were available at a cheaper price to the consumers and palmolein was also supplied to the States and Union Territories as per their demand for supply through the Public Distribution System. Against a