

Amount Spent on Research in Cardamom

905. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount spent for research in respect of cardamom for the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the achievements made in increasing production of cardamom;

(c) the present average production per hectare; and

(d) India's position compared with the other cardamom producing countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) The amount spent on research and development of cardamom, by the Spices Board, during the last 3 years is as under:-

	(Rs. IN LAKHS)
1993-94	90.79
1994-95	117.28
1995-96	130.00

(b) and (c) The details of production and productivity for small and large cardamom during the last 5 years are given below:—

Year	Small cardamom		Large cardamom	
	Production Productivity (Tonnes) (Kg./Ha.)		Production Productivity (Tonnes) (Kg./Ha.)	
1991-92	80	5000	3400	162
1992-93	70	4250	3550	168
1993-94	108	6600	3725	176
1994-95	113	7000	4100	194
1995-96	128	7900	4702	225

The enhancement in production/productivity of both small and large cardamom is mainly due to the research and developmental activities undertaken by the Indian Cardamom Research Instt. under the Spices Board. The other major achievements of the research and development effort include development of high yielding varieties of cardamom; research on vanilla, herbal spices, organic cultivation of cardamom and pepper, vermiculture and development of bio-control for pests and diseases etc.

(d) Apart from India, Guatemala, Papua New Guinea, Honduras and Sri Lanka are producers of small cardamom. Guatemala's production is about 13000 tonnes per annum while the Indian production ranges from 6000 to 7900 tonnes accounting for around 35% of the world production. In the case of large cardamom, Nepal and Bhutan are the other large cardamom producing countries and they together produce about 4000 tonnes per annum while production in India is estimated to be 4000 tonnes per annum.

Import and Export of Cardamom

906. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of cardamom imported during 1996-97 so far;

(b) the quantity exported during the last three years including 1996-97;

(c) the incentives given to the exporters to export cardamom;

(d) the reasons for decline in the export of cardamom; and

(e) the incentives for promoting cardamom cultivation, details thereof;

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) The quantity and values of small cardamom imported for the period April 96 to September 96 are as follows:—

	Quantity	Value
Cardamom small	12480 Kg.	Rs. 23.14 lakhs

(Source: DGCI&S)

(b) Quantity and value of small cardamom exported during the last 3 years are as under:

	Quantity (MTs)	Value (Rs. crores)
1994-95	257	7.63
1995-96	500	12.40
1996-97(April-Jan)	150	5.47

(c) Some of the incentives given to the exporters to boost the export of cardamom include:—

(i) Exemption of cess on export of cardamom.

- (ii) Reimbursement of air freight charges at the rate of Rs. 20 per Kg. for export of small cardamom in consumer packs by air to middle-east destinations.
- (iii) Sponsoring trade delegations and participation in trade fairs.
- (d) Some of the reasons for decline in export of cardamom are:—
 - (i) Uncompetitive prices of Indian cardamom in the international market vis-a-vis Guatemalan cardamom.
 - (ii) Stiff price competition offered by Guatemalan cardamom on account of its large production, high productivity and absence of domestic demand.
 - (iii) shift in consumer preference in the middle-east markets towards the low priced Guatemalan cardamom.
- (e) Some of the steps taken by the Government to increase production/ productivity of cardamom include:—
 - (i) Production and supply of quality planting material.
 - (ii) Assistance for replantation of old diseased plants;
 - (iii) Subsidy for irrigation and land development; and
 - (iv) Assistance for purchase of plant protection equipment.

Quantitative Import Restrictions

907. SHRI N. THALAVASUNDARAM:
SHRI S. NIRAISKULATHAN:

Will the Minister COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's trading partners have expressed concern over quantitative import restrictions on some consumer goods and also agricultural and textiles products;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in the matter;

(c) whether Government have promised phasing out restrictions gradually; and

(d) the economic bearing on the Nation on account of such phasing out of restriction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) At the consultations held by the Committee on Balance-of-Payments-Restrictions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), with India in January 1997 under Article XVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1994, major developed countries were of the view that the present balance of payments situation did not warrant a continuation of import restrictions under the cover of balance of Payments provisions of Article XVIII. They were of the view that India could protect its domestic industry through appropriate tariffs. The Indian delegation had pressed the argument that while the monetary resources position might appear to be satisfactory, there was need for caution and that certain areas of concern had to be taken into account.

In the light of the discussions, the Committee agreed to resume the consultation in June 1997 to consider a plan, to be presented by India to eliminate the measures notified under Article XVIII and to conclude the consultations consistently with all relevant WTO balance of payments provisions.

Liberalising Import of Consumer Goods

908. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government have liberalised the import of 161 categories of goods including a number of consumer items; and

(b) if so, the details and reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, as part of the on going process of review of the Export & Import Policy, changes in the Import Policy of a few items have recently been made as per details indicated in Ministry of