

(b) whether Government propose to bring about any policy changes to make agriculture export oriented and to ensure more capital investment in the agriculture sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the procedure to be followed by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) As per the statistics made available by the Department of Commerce, the percentage of agricultural contribution in the total exports of the country, during the year 2000-2001, was 13.54.

(b) to (d) Policy of exports of agricultural products forms an integral part of the Export / Import Policy of the country. The policy regarding the exports of agricultural products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximising farm incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of agricultural products is an ongoing process, and accordingly, policy interventions are made as and when considered necessary with a view to making agricultural exports increasingly viable. The long-term Export Policy lays stress on the promotion of agricultural exports. The Policy envisages the creation of Agri Export Zones for the end to end development for export of specific products from a geographically contiguous area. These zones are to be identified by the respective State Government who would also evolve a comprehensive package of services such as provision of pre / post harvest treatment and operations, plant protection, processing, storage and related research and development. The agro sector can also avail of the Exim Policy Schemes like Duty Exemption Scheme and Export Capital Goods Scheme. The recent Exim Policy announced by the Government, on the 31st March, 2001, also envisages the entitlement of Agri-exporters for recognition as Export House / Trading House / Star Trading Houses / Super Star Trading House on achieving 1/3rd of the threshold limit prescribed for exports of other goods.

Sale of agricultural commodities to consumers

3514. **SHRI SHYAM LAL:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the maximum limit for sale of foodgrains, edible oils, oilseeds, vegetables by the traders to consumers would be fixed by Government, as is fixed in respect of production thereof by the farmers; and

[24 August, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

(b) if so, by when it would be done and what would be the proportion of profit?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Gainful price for farmers' produce

†3515. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to provide attractive and gainful price to farmers, based on the total cost/expenditure on their produce;

(b) if so, the details of action taken so far in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) The Government announces each season Minimum Support Prices for 25 major agricultural commodities and organizes purchase operations whenever required, through the public and cooperative agencies. The Government decides on the minimum support prices for various agricultural commodities taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) and other factors considered important in price fixation. While making its recommendations, the CACP considers a number of factors and cost of production is the most important factor. The cost of production covers not only paid-out costs but also imputed value of owned assets including land and family labour for which the farmers do not incur cash expenses. The minimum support prices fixed by the Government not only cover cost of production but also a reasonable margin as an incentive to the farmers to invest and improve production and productivity.

Purchase of Air Conditioners at IASRI

3516. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Director, Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute (IASRI) under Indian Council of Agricultural Research has recently furnished his office room with new Air Conditioners / Carpet etc. whereas the room was already having these facilities in good / working condition;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.