

(d) In order to further increase production of foodgrains in the country, the Government of India is implementing the following schemes:—

- National Food Security Mission (NFSM) launched in November, 2007 aims at increasing the production of rice by 10 million tones, wheat by 8 million tones and pulses by 2 million tones by the end of the Eleventh Plan, *i.e.* by 2011-12 through area increase and productivity enhancement in targeted districts.
- A Centrally Sponsored Scheme “Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize” (ISOPOM) is being implemented since 01.04.2004.
- Centrally Sponsored Scheme “Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Rice Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Rice), Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Wheat Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Wheat) and Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Coarse Cereals Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Coarse Cereals)” subsumed under Macro Management Mode of Agriculture with effect from October, 2000 are under implementation to provide more flexibility to States based on local needs.
- The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) launched in 2007 aims to incentivise the States to increase investment in agriculture and allied sector.

#### **Maximum export price for onion**

3062. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Maharashtra has brought out that the present system of fixing the maximum export price by NAFED is causing considerable difficulty to the onion producers as also causing loss of export trade for the country;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in taking a decision in the matter; and

(c) whether Government will decide it before the arrival of Kharif onion crops this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):

(a) to (c) There is no proposal from Government of Maharashtra to review fixing of maximum export price of Onion. However, Government of Maharashtra has requested to modify existing Minimum Export Price (MEP) procedure regarding export of Onion and to remove Minimum Export Price. Minimum Export Price (MEP) for export of onions for different varieties is fixed by NAFED every month in consultation with the representatives of Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs, Agriculture, State Trading Enterprises (STE) and Association shippers. As and when the prices in domestic market rises, MEP is increased to restrict export of onion to improve

availability for domestic consumers. Similarly, when there is bumper production and price crash, MEP is fixed at lower level to increase the outflow of onion from the country for the benefit of the onion growers. It is therefore a regulatory mechanism aimed at balancing the interest of producers and consumers.

Any move to waiving off MEP system may adversely affect the domestic availability and prices of onion as there may not be any control on the export and the domestic consumers may suffer due to less availability and high prices of onion and in case bumper crop of onion, the onion growers may suffer as they may not get remunerative price for their produce.

#### **Settlement of reimbursement of losses**

3063. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nonsettlement of demand for reimbursement of losses amounting to rupees 30,000 crores in cotton procurement has been a contributory factor to the large number of suicides taking place in Vidarbha by cotton producing farmers; and

(b) whether the Ministry assures that the matter of reimbursement would be settled before the commencement of the cotton purchasing season this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):

(a) and (b) The payment to the cotton growers in the State of Maharashtra under Minimum Support Price (MSP) has already been made and dues are pending.

#### **Potential of employment generation in agriculture sector**

†3064. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether employment generation avenues have declined in agriculture sector;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government has worked on any action plan for the creation of additional opportunities of employment in agriculture sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):

(a) and (b) As per Population Census data released by the Registrar General of India, the number of persons engaged in agriculture sector comprising cultivators and agricultural labourers has increased from 210.68 million in 1991 to 234.10 million in 2001, registering an increase of 11.11% in ten years. According to the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), (61st Round) as per Usual Status, the estimated number of workers employed in agriculture, has increased from 239.73 million in 1999-2000 (55th round) to 258.59 million in 2004-05 (61st round), showing an increase of 7.86% in five years.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.