

(c) Domestic prices of pulses have risen mainly on account of decline in production of pulses. As per 4th Advance Estimates, the domestic production of pulses has declined to 14.66 million tonnes during 2008-09 as compared to 14.76 million tonnes during 2007-08 (Final Estimates) leading to a supply demand mismatch. In addition, hardening of international prices affected imports of pulses and total domestic availability.

(d) Government measure to bring down the prices of pulses are given in the Statement.

Statement

GOVERNMENT MEASURES

A. Ban on export/duty reduction on import/Import by PSUs

- Extended zero duty on import of pulses for another one year, up to 31.3.2010.
- Extended the ban on export of pulses (except kabuli chana) for another one year, up to 31.3.2010.
- Extended the current dispensation for PSUs to import pulses against reimbursement up to 15% of losses and service charge of 1.2% of CIF value for another year, up to 31.3.2010.

B. Supply of pulses through PDS

- Extended the scheme for distribution of imported pulses through PDS for six months, up to 30.9.2009.

C. On Stock Limits

- Removal of restrictions on licensing, stock limits and movement of pulses be kept in abeyance for a period upto 30th September, 2009 *w.e.f.* 02.04.2009.

BPL families in the country

†2302. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of families living below the poverty line in the country;
- (b) whether the proposed National Food Security Act is faced with difficulties in implementation;
- (c) if so, the details of those difficulties; and
- (d) the action plan to keep National Food Security Scheme corruption-free and ensure benefit thereunder to all the families living below the poverty line?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) For allocation of foodgrains to States and UTs under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), the Department of Food and Public Distribution uses the number of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families based on 1993-94 poverty estimates of Planning

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Commission and population estimates of the Registrar General of India as on 1st March, 2000. This number is 6.52 crore. Based on 2004-05 poverty estimates and March, 2009 population estimates, this number is 5.91 crore.

However, as reported by 30.06.2009, the State and UT Governments have issued 10.86 crore BPL cards, which include 2.43 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) cards.

(b) to (d) Government proposes to enact the National Food Security Act. Under the proposed law, every BPL family is to be entitled to receive 25 kg of food grains per month. Details of eligible BPL families to be covered, methodology for their identification, issue of targeted identification cards to them, reforms to be introduced in TPDS, etc. are yet to be worked out. Presently, examination of different aspects of the proposed law in consultation with various stake holders is in progress.

Rise in prices of essential commodities

2303. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the prices of essential commodities continues to rise;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) what steps Government is taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Government is aware of rise in prices of certain essential commodities such as pulses, sugar and potato and has taken several steps to check the increase in prices by taking effective measures such as augmenting domestic supplies of foodgrains through imports at zero/reduced rates of duty and ban on exports. As a result of the various steps taken by Government, prices of certain essential commodities have generally declined or are steady.

(b) Rise in domestic prices is owing to the combined effect of different factors such as, growing demand on account of increase in population and income, hardening of international prices, changes in consumption pattern, diversion of food grains for fuel, adverse weather and climate change, increase in crude oil prices, hikes in MSP, improvement in income and living standards, increase in freight rates as well as seasonal factors.

(c) The Government has taken a number of steps to control the price rise and to soften the impact of price rise on consumers. The important steps taken are briefly listed in the Statement.

Statement

List of Government Measures

(A) Short Term Measures

1. Fiscal Measures

- (i) Reducing import duties to zero — for wheat, pulses, edible oils (crude) and maize (under TRQ of 5 lakh tonnes per annum, beyond which 15% duty will apply);