

- (a) how many Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) are there in Assam;
- (b) the details of role of these Kendras to boost production of rice and other agricultural products to meet the growing demand in their respective areas; and
- (c) whether it is a fact that the K.V.K. meant for the district of Barpeta established in the district of Baksa in Assam?

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

(a) Twenty KVKs are functioning at present in Assam State.

(b) KVKs in Assam State are involved in conducting on-farm trials for technology assessment, and refinement for field application of technologies, demonstrations of proven technologies for their popularization and training the farmers, rural youths and extension personnel towards adoption of the recommended technologies in their field.

(c) No, Sir.

Decline in sowing of paddy

3059. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that sowing of paddy, a major foodgrain, has gone down;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps taken to improve the situation in this regard?

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

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The coverage under area of rice has declined so far during Kharif 2009 season due to drought like situation prevailing at present. Less coverage of rice has been reported mainly in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and West Bengal.

The Ministry of Agriculture is constantly reviewing the sowing progress with the State Governments through weekly video-conferences/meetings, particularly in the wake of weak monsoon so far to coordinate adequate response. For different scenarios, contingency crop-plans for specific-agro climatic conditions have been prepared. General features of these plans include replacement of main crop such as rice with alternate crop like millets in case of delayed sowing; planning of early maturing varieties of the main crop; planning for protective irrigation by efficiency use of available water, promoting technical package of practices like direct sowing, less plant spacing, more seed rate etc. Truthfully labeled seeds are allowed to be distributed under various schemes in the affected areas. Age norms are relaxed for the seed varieties distributed under Government Schemes. In case of delayed planting, additional doses of nutrients are recommended for crops in good rainfall areas which to some extent compensate the reduction of production in rain-deficient States/areas.