

The gross value of cotton procured under PSS in Maharashtra is Rs. 5500.52 cores. As a matter of policy and MOU signed between NAFED and MSCCGMFL, NAFED releases 90% of the value to the procuring agency and remaining 10% is paid after finalization of accounts. Against this, NAFED has already paid Rs. 5097.48 crore to MSCCGMFL.

Alternative cropping strategies

2274. PROF. M.S. SWAMINATHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether contingency plans have been drawn up to promote alternative cropping strategies in monsoon deficit areas and whether seed reserves have been built up to ensure crop security under conditions of aberrant rainfall;

(b) whether compensatory production programmes have been initiated in areas with adequate moisture availability, in order to make good to the extent possible, the loss in production suffered in drought affected areas; and

(c) the steps taken by the National Rainfed Area Authority to promote drought proofing of crops?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Agriculture has been constantly monitoring the sowing progress with the states 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 for early maturing varieties of the main crop; Planning for protective irrigation by efficient use of available water; and Promoting Technical Package of Practices like direct sowing, less plant spacing, more seed rate etc. Additional seed quantity of 15 lakh quintals is available to support the contingency crops. Truthfully labeled seeds are allowed to be distributed under Government schemes in the affected areas. Age norms are relaxed for the seed varieties distributed under Government Schemes. In case of delayed planting, additional dose of nutrients are recommended for crops in good rainfall areas which will to some extent compensate the reduction in scarcity areas. It has been advised to take up renovation of existing water harvesting structures in NREGS during July-August so that the likely high rainfall received during September can be stored and used for a pre-sowing irrigation of rabi crops in order to capitalize on good rabi production.

(c) The National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) has prepared a vision document "Harnessing Opportunities in Rainfed Areas". The Vision Document will help to guide and provide future direction to harness innovative policies, knowledge, technologies and opportunities for holistic and sustainable development of rainfed areas. The document will help in developing perspective plans for the rainfed areas. The NRAA has also issued common

guidelines for convergence of all watershed development programmes for development of Rainfed Areas through Watershed Management approach which address the issues of Soil and Water Conservation including drought mitigation and drought proofing of crops and livelihood of the farmers.

Rainfed farming

2275. SHRI SABIR ALI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) what is the status of rainfed farming system;
- (b) the schemes for rainfed farming; and
- (c) in which parts of the country these programmes need to be implemented vigorously?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Approximately 79.44 million hectare of land in the country is cultivated under rainfed conditions. There are many schemes supporting rainfed farming in the country, viz., National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA), Soil Conservation for Enhancing Productivity of Degraded lands in the Catchments of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone River (RVP and FPR), Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA), Reclamation and Development of Alkali and Acid Soils (RADAS). Other externally aided projects are also being implemented on watershed approach by the Ministry of Agriculture for development of rainfed and degraded lands through various soil and water conservation measures. At the end of second year of Eleventh Plan, about 20.46 million hectare area has been developed under these programmes with an expenditure of Rs. 10,964 crores.

The Ministry of Rural Development is also implementing area development programme namely Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) on watershed basis for the development of wastelands/degraded lands/rainfed areas. Under the above schemes so far 45,062 projects have been sanctioned covering 32.31 million hectare. At the end of 2nd year of the Eleventh plan period Rs. 9253.70 crores has been released to the States for implementation of these programmes.

Rainfed area development programmes need to be implemented vigorously in the arid and semi arid regions of the country comprising areas in the states like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

Government's policy on co-operative sector

2276. SHRI SABIR ALI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that in the recent past the co-operative sector has lost much of its sheen;