

administrative control of Department of Food and Public Distribution, has planned to set up a Container Freight Station facility at Udyogmandal, Kochi in association with Fertilizer and Chemical Travancore Ltd. (FACT) Kochi, a public sector undertaking under Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers as per Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with FACT on 03.05.2008.

(b) and (c) The cost involved in the project and the jobs likely to be created are yet to be worked out.

SAZ to boost agriculture production

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

(a) whether Government is aware of the steep fall in production of agriculture items and phenomenal increase in the prices of essential food items;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is working on a plan for setting up Special Agriculture Zone to boost agriculture production;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):
(a) and (b) There has been no steep fall in the production of food grains. As per final estimates of 2007-08 food grain production at 230.78 Million tones was recorded. As per third Advance Estimates for the year 2008-09, production of food grain is likely to be at 229.85 Million Tonnes. The Government is aware of the increase in prices of essential food items during the year 2008-09. The prices of essential commodities were closely monitored and various measures were taken to augment supplies and stabilize prices of certain essential commodities. Rise in domestic prices was owing to the combined effect of factors such as, growing demand on account of increase in population and income, hardening of international prices, changes in consumption pattern, etc. Government has been taking effective steps to moderate the prices.

(c) to (e) As of now there is no proposal under consideration to Establish SAZ. However, for the development of Agriculture Sector, a number of initiatives and plan scheme are being implemented, which includes Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Horticulture Mission (NHM) Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA) and Micro Irrigation etc.

Cultivation problems in small agriculture plots

147. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that with the division of agricultural land, number of agriculture plots have increased specially in hilly areas;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether small farmers are finding it difficult to cultivate their small portion of land in the absence of small tractors; and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to manufacture small tractors for farmers?

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

(a) Yes, Sir. A comparative statement indicating the distribution of number of operational holdings in the hilly States is annexed (*See below*).

(b) and (c) There is no information about the farmers facing difficulty in cultivation of small land holdings in absence of small tractors. Different models of small tractors upto 18 HP are being manufactured in the country. Besides, the power tillers have also been the most suitable source of power for carrying out different field operations in the small holdings, particularly in the hilly areas. The light weight power tillers of 5.8 Kw (7.9 Ps) to 9.2 Kw (12.5 Ps) are also being manufactured in the country which are suitable for hilly areas. Assistance in the form of subsidy is also available to the farmers for purchase of tractors and power tillers under Macro Management Scheme.

Statement

Distribution of number of operational holdings in major Hilly States in India as per Agriculture Census 1995-96 and 2000-01

Sl. No.	States	Number of operational holdings		Percentage change during 2000-01 over 1995-96
		1995-96	2000-01	
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	103734	106783	2.94
2.	Assam	2682997	2712137	1.09
3.	Himachal Pradesh	862897	913914	5.91
4.	Jammu and Kashmir	1335779	1442894	8.02
5.	Manipur	142755	149328	4.60
6.	Meghalaya	160341	214110	35.53
7.	Mizoram	65919	75523	14.57
8.	Nagaland	149171	143791	-3.61
9.	Sikkim	44245	66635	50.60

1	2	3	4	5
10.	Tripura	301032	479428	59.26
11.	Uttarakhand*	—	890667	—
TOTAL HILLY AREA:		5848870	6304543	22.70

*Total and percentages excludes Uttarakhand as comparative data is not available.

Use of sub-standard pesticides

148. SHRI N.K. SINGH:

SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that farmers in the country lose their crops worth several crore annually due to use of sub-standard pesticides and insecticides;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether in the absence of any proper check on the manufacturers and distributors of pesticides and insecticides on the quality of their products, the farmers who are using such products are badly affected; and

(d) if so, the details of corrective steps Government proposes to take in this regard?

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

(a) and (b) The Government has received representations from the pesticide industry regarding manufacture and sale of spurious pesticides in the market. A news item published in the newspaper 'Business Standard' dated 22/09/2008 had mentioned annual crop loss worth Rs. 6,000 crore due to spurious pesticides.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Quality of pesticides is checked by the State Governments through regular drawal and analysis of pesticide samples by Insecticide Inspectors, Insecticide Analysts and Pesticide Testing Laboratories under the provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968. 21 States and one UT have set up 55 State Pesticide Testing Laboratories with an annual capacity of analyzing over 52,940 pesticide samples. Two Regional Pesticides Testing Laboratories at Chandigarh and Kanpur with annual capacity of 2,000 samples supplement the resources of States/UTs in analysis of pesticides. Besides, the Government has set up a Central Insecticides Laboratory at Faridabad as referral laboratory.

Demand of Bt. Cotton seeds in the country

149. SHRI NANDAMURI HARIKRISHNA:

SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of Bt. Cotton seeds demand in the country during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise;