

- State Agriculture Ministers Conference held on 21.8.2009 to review the position and facilitate drawing up and implementing appropriate Agriculture & Constructive Action Plan.
- A meeting of Relief Commissioners of drought affected States held on 27th August 2009 to review measures being taken to reduce the impact of drought.
- Rabi 2009 Conference held on 24-25 September, 2009.
- Video Conference held on 5th & 6th October, 2009 with the drought declared States including some other States viz. Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana & Gujarat to review the issues relating to drought management, preparedness for Rabi season and status of implementation and expenditure under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

Scheme for 25 kg. rice at Rs. 3 per kg.

199. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government is proposing to issue 25 kg. of rice in a month at Rs. 3 per kg.;
- (b) if so, when it will be issued;
- (c) the financial commitment to Government by this scheme every year; and
- (d) the political implication of this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. Foodgrains are allocated to States/Union Territories under Targeted Public Distribution System for their distribution to ration cardholders at subsidized prices. Government proposes to enact National Food Security Act as announced by the Honourable President of India in her address to the Joint Session of Parliament on 4th June, 2009.

(b) to (d) At present, Government is examining various aspects of the proposed law.

Implementation of PDS

200. DR. K.MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Public Distribution Scheme would be a success when it is not well organised in many States and is subject to a lot of misuse;
- (b) the foolproof system contemplated to ensure effective and successful implementation of the scheme; and
- (c) the measures to avert political interference in terms of selection of beneficiaries and to ensure right quantity and quality at right time to the beneficiaries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments. The Central Government has taken the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of foodgrains to the States and UTs. The operational responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, issuance of ration cards to them and supervision over and monitoring of functioning of over 5 lakh fair price shops, rest with the concerned State/UT Governments.

Barring certain instances of malpractices, TPDS has been ensuring distribution of subsidized foodgrains to identified BPL as well as APL families in the country.

To improve functioning of TPDS and to ensure that entitled quantities of foodgrains of proper quality get distributed to the eligible families, Government has directed State & UT Governments to take up the following measures -

- A. to strengthen monitoring and vigilance by -
 - i) implementation of the Nine Point Action Plan;
 - ii) taking action against those with Bogus Ration Cards; and
 - iii) ensuring greater involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) Urban Local Bodies in functioning of Fair Price Shops.
- B. to ensure increased transparency in functioning of TPDS by-
 - i) adoption and implementation of revised Model Citizens' Charter;
 - ii) introduction of monthly certification of delivery of foodgrains at Fair Price Shops and their distribution to ration card holders;
 - iii) taking up publicity-cum-awareness Campaign on TPDS; and
 - iv) display of allocation of foodgrains - district and FPS wise on websites for public scrutiny.
- C. to use ICT tools such as:
 - i) computerisation of TPDS Operations;
 - ii) pilot scheme on Smart Card based Operations in Haryana and Chandigarh;
 - iii) piloting of new technologies for tracking movement of vehicles transporting TPDS Commodities.
- D. to improve efficiency of FPS operations through-
 - i) doorstep delivery of foodgrains;
 - ii) ensuring timely availability of foodgrains;
 - iii) distribution of wheat flour/fortified wheat flour under TPDS;

- iv) allotment of Fair Price Shops to Institutions and Groups;
- v) sale of non-PDS items by FPS licensees, and
- vi) revision of commission to FPS licensees.

The Government has been following up with the State/UT Governments for implementation of these measures.

Shortage of rice and wheat

201. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government intends to ban export of rice in the prevailing drought and flood situation to meet the country's food requirement;
- (b) the expected deficit of rice and wheat production because of prevailing drought and flood situation; and
- (c) how Government plans to meet the shortage of rice and wheat to ensure food security to the people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. In view of the lower estimate of production of rice in kharif crop in 2009-10, it has been decided by the Government to continue the ban on export of non-basmati rice till further orders.

(b) As per first Advance Estimates of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, production of kharif rice of 2009-10 is estimated at 69.45 million tonnes, against the estimated production of 84.58 million tonnes in kharif rice of 2008-09 (fourth Advance Estimates). Estimate of production of wheat crop of 2009-10 to be marketed in Rabi Marketing Season 2010-11 has not yet been made.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to maximize procurement of rice and wheat to ensure food security of the country are given in the Statement.

Statement

Steps taken by the Government to maximize procurement of Wheat and Rice:

Wheat

- (i) Wheat export on private account has been banned from 9.2.2007 till further orders.
- (ii) Import of wheat on private account at zero duty has been permitted till further orders.
- (iii) The Central issue prices of wheat have not been increased since 1.7.2002 in order to lessen the burden of inflation on the poor.