

(d) the alternative route provided by Railways for the passage of vehicles as well as pedestrians, and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (d) No, Sir. No level crossing has been closed so far since January, 2010 in Mumbai.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Shortage of milk production in North India

†895. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the time when Government came to know of shortage of milk production in North India;
- (b) the extent of shortage in milk production and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the steps taken by Government to increase the production of milk;
- (d) by when this effort will start yielding results; and
- (e) the extent of price rise in milk from January, 2009 till now?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):
(a) and (b) There is no report of shortage in milk production in North India.

(c) and (d) Milk production in the country has increased from 80.6 million tonnes in the year 2000-01 to 108.5 million tonnes in 2008-09. Government is implementing following dairy development schemes in the country for increases in milk production:—

1. 'National Project on Cattle and Buffalo Breeding' to improve productivity of milch animals.
2. 'Intensive Dairy Development Programme' in hilly and backward areas.
3. 'Dairy Venture Capital Fund' through promoting entrepreneurship and self employment in rural areas by providing interest free loan through National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

(e) The sale price of milk has been increased by Rs.1-7 per litre in the country in this period.

Sowing of rabi crop in North India

896. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the extent to which sowing of rabi crop in North India has suffered due to severe weather conditions in the region during this winter (2009-10), State-wise;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether any financial assistance has been given to the farmers to speed up sowing operations so as to make up for the loss of time for sowing during the period; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, State and UT-wise, as against the demand of the concerned State/UT administrations for the purpose?

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

(a) to (c) As on 26.2.10, an area of 379.67 lakh hectares has been sown under total food grains in the country including north Indian states, which is 6.36 lakh hectares more than the normal area of 373.31 lakh hectares. The area coverage of wheat, the major Rabi crop, has also increased by 7.19 lakh hectares compared to the normal coverage of 270.98 lakh hectares. There is major gain of 23.82 lakh hectares under pulses coverage also compared to normal coverage of 119.47 lakh hectares. The coverage under oilseeds has been 92.27 lakh hectares as against 90.92 lakh hectares covered during last Rabi.

In order to supplement the efforts of the State Government/Union Territories, assistance is provided to the farmers for procuring inputs such as seeds, nutrients, plant protection chemicals, machinery etc. under centrally sponsored and Central Sector Schemes of National Food Security Mission, ISOPOM, ICDP, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana etc.

Strategies for higher agricultural growth

897. SHRI GOVINDRAO WAMANRAO ADIK:

SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently convened a meeting with States Head to discuss the strategies on achieving higher agriculture growth and to tackle the shortage of essential commodities as well as to contain increased food prices in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the issues deliberated and decisions arrived at in the said meeting; and

(c) the details of steps proposed by Government to bolster food production and tackle the shortage of essential commodities?

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

(a) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution convened a Conference of Chief Ministers on 6th February, 2010, to discuss issues relating to prices of essential commodities. The Conference also discussed strategies for achieving higher agriculture growth and to tackle the shortage of essential commodities.