

(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.

(b) and (c) Deliberations in the Conference and decisions taken to bolster food production and tackle shortage of commodities include taking up programmes for increasing production and productivity of foodgrain crops, bridging gaps in farm yields between States, strengthening implementation of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, better implementation and amendment to Essential Commodities Act, better and effective delivery of essential commodities to the vulnerable sections of society and augmentation of warehousing and storage capacity (including cold chains).

Production of onion and potato

†898. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the production of potato and onion in the country has suffered due to draught and floods;

(b) if so, the production of above mentioned products in the years 2007, 2008 and 2009; and

(c) the quantity of these items exported out of above production during each of the above mentioned years?

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

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The area under kharif potato in some States has been reduced because of less and delayed rains. Similarly production of late kharif onion has also suffered due to delayed and scanty rains as compared to last year. However, the total production of both potato and onion in the country in the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 is as follows:—

Production (000 MT)			
Year/Crop	2007	2008	2009
Onion	10847	13900	13565
Potato	28600	34658	34391

(c) The quantity of onion and potato exported during the last three years is as follows:—

Quantity (000 MT)			
Year/Crop	2007	2008	2009
Onion	1102	1783	1578
Potato	78	185	25

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.