Factors necessitating foodgrain imports

†1697. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage contribution of increase in population, decrease in the fertility of soil due to use of chemical fertilizers, decrease in cultivable land, storage losses and other factors in creating the need of foodgrain imports in the country; and

(b) the measures being taken to deal with these factors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Import of foodgrains in the country depends on the demand and supply situation. Demand of foodgrains is dependent on several factors such as increase in population, rise in incomes etc. Production and supply of foodgrains depends on several factors such as cultivable land, rainfall, inputs like seeds, fertilizers, post harvest losses, buffer stocks. Mismatch between demand and supply leads to need for imports. No specific study on percentage contribution of each factor in need of import of foodgrains is available. Recently imports have taken place mainly in case of pulses.

(b) Government of India has taken a number of steps such as launching two major schemes (i) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (ii) National Food Security Mission for wheat, rice and pulses to increase production & productivity in the agriculture sector.

Production of GM crops for food security

†1698. SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government assumes that production of GM crops is necessary for the food security in the country;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there is no consensus among the scientists from the country and the world regarding the GM crops being safe for human life; and

(d) if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) Biotechnology is an important adjunct to conventional plant breeding for sustainable agricultural development. Genetically Modified (GM) crops have the potential to increase farm-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.