

- (b) the total number of Regional Agmark Laboratories in the country, State-wise;
- (c) the average number of check samples analysed by a Regional Agmark Laboratory over a period of one month;
- (d) whether Government contemplates to further strengthen the existing agriculture marketing system to ensure optimum conformity of edible commodities with the standards set under Agmark; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Grade and Standards for 202 agricultural commodities have been framed under Agmark so far.

(b) There are 11 Regional Agmark Laboratories in the country, one each in the State of Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and National Capital Territory of Delhi.

(c) On an average, 91 check samples were analysed by a Regional Agmark Laboratory (RAL) in a month during 2008-09.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. Based on trade requirements, standards for various commodities are being framed. Existing Agmark Standards are revised based on requirements of Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 from time to time. Agmark Standards of various commodities are harmonized with International Standards such as Codex Alimentarius Commission to make them acceptable in International Market.

Indo-US agreement in agriculture sector

3080. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has approved a new agreement with the United States that aims, *inter-alia*, at promoting privatization of agricultural extension services and facilitating collaborations between American agri-business and the Indian farm sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether MoU with United States on agriculture and food security would in any way will be beneficial for the country; and

(d) if so, to what extent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed in March, 2010 between India and the United States of America for cooperation in agriculture and food security. The aim of the proposed cooperation is to learn from any positive experiences that the United States may have had that will serve to significantly develop our own agricultural sector. Disseminating modern agricultural practices is at the core of the proposed cooperation with the US Government and private sector partners.

(c) and (d) The MoU identifies areas of cooperation which are considered to be advantageous in achieving our developmental goals.

Special projects in LWE districts

3081. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has taken up special projects in the 33 Left Wing Extremist (LWE) districts of India;

(b) if so, the allocation for this financial year; and

(c) since LWE districts are mostly tribal districts and tribals are holding small farms show does his Ministry plans to assist them to maximize their agricultural yield annually and to keep them engaged on the farm at least for 200 days a year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is no specific proposal under consideration to assist tribals specifically to maximize their agriculture yield or to keep them engaged on the farm for 200 days a year.

Farm Gate to Home Gate Scheme

3082. SHRI ISHWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether NAFED has decided to extend its 'Farm Gate to Home Gate' campaign to every State in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether performance of NAFED outlets operating in some States have been evaluated; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by when NAFED outlets are likely to be opened in each State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. NAFED has reported that as a part of NAFED's campaign to bring down the rising prices, NAFED has launched its 'Farm Gate to Home Gate' initiative under its 'Easy Market Scheme' in Delhi on 12.02.2010 with 17 kitchen basics, in Chennai on 15.02.2010 with 11 kitchen basics and in Cochin on 09.04.2010 with 20 kitchen basics. NAFED plans to extend this initiative to other States, gradually.

(c) and (d) Performance of NAFED's outlets are being regularly evaluated by them. NAFED's outlets are working at five locations in Delhi and two at Shimla in Himachal Pradesh. Besides, mobiles outlets are also put in place as and when required. In addition, NAFED is affiliating the outlets run by cooperative and public sector with NAFED's 'National Retail