

National Agricultural Insurance Scheme

3842. SHRI K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether National Agricultural Insurance Scheme presently covers presowing/planting risks;
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government proposes to cover them also; and
- (d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):
(a) and (b) No, Sir. National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) which is under implementation since Rabi 1999-2000 covers only yield losses due to non-preventable risk during period from sowing till harvesting.

- (c) Yes, Sir.
- (d) Based on recommendations including coverage of pre-sowing/planting risk of the Joint Group, constituted by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, a proposal on Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS) has been prepared by the Government.

Growth of parthenium weed

3843. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the total area of arable land that has become uncultivable due to rampant growth of the parthenium weed;
- (b) whether Government is aware of the experiments conducted in the State of Haryana of using the beetle zygramma as an effective antidote; and
- (c) the action Government intends to take for carrying out adequate tests for the development of this beetle as an antidote to the pernicious weed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):
(a) Out of total cultivable and arable land about 14.25 million hectare land has been estimated to be infested severely with the rampant growth of parthenium weed. However, with manual weeding and using herbicides, farmers are able to cultivate crops in these areas too but with low productivity.

(b) Government is aware that parthenium weed defoliating beetle zygogramma bicolorata is being used to suppress parthenium in the State of Haryana. Nucleus culture of zygogramma bicolorata supplied from Directorate of Weed Science Research, Jabalpur is being regularly released by Haryana Agricultural University the Krishi Vigyan Kendras located in different districts of Haryana.

(c) Research efforts have been made at Directorate of Weed Science Research, Jabalpur to develop technologies to mass rear zygogramma bicolorata throughout the year to use it as an

effective antidote against pernicious parthenium weed. Technologies have also been developed to overcome the limitations of this bioagent to make it more effective against parthenium.

Gene fund for improved seed varieties

3844. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has mooted a gene fund for improved seeds varieties and plans to invite private participation to develop both the fund and research;

(b) whether this would become a major project once it takes off with a private public partnership model; and

(c) if so, whether PPP model functions would have to be worked out and whether Government is keen for private participation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):
(a) to (c) The establishment of 'National Gene Fund' has been done under the provisions of section 45 of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act (PPV and FR Act), 2001. The management of this fund is being done as per the provisions of PPV and FR Act, 2001 and PPV and FR Rules, 2003. The Gene Fund is applied, *inter alia*, for the expenditure for supporting the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources including in *situ* and *ex-situ* collections and for strengthening the capability of the Panchayat in carrying out such conservation and sustainable use.

National Project on Management of Soil Health and Fertility

3845. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the aims and objectives of the new scheme National Project on Management of Soil Health and Fertility;

(b) whether it is a fact that under the above scheme Government only set up soil testing laboratories across the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the details of the STLs set up in Andhra Pradesh;

(e) whether it is also a fact that not a single STL has been set up in Andhra Pradesh in 2009-10;

(f) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(g) how the above project helps in increasing the fertility of soil and thereby productivity in the country?