

Adulterated rice in FCI godowns

398. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that samples of rice taken from different godowns of the FCI have been found to be adulterated this year;

(b) whether Government have made any attempt to find out the manner in which such adulteration was made;

(c) what action Government have taken to prevent adulteration in grains and cereals; and

(d) whether any action has been taken to find out the culprits who were involved in adulterating rice in different FCI godowns during this year and what action has been taken against those culprits?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MISS KAMLA KUMARI): (a) No report of finding of adulteration in rice samples taken by the Food Inspection, Department of Prevention of Food Adulteration, Delhi Administration from the godowns of the Food Corporation of India has been received by the Government or the FCI.

(b) to (d) In the light of the observation made against (a) the question does not arise.

Buffer stock of Sugar

399. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal for selling up a five lakh tone sugar buffer stock has been finalised by Government;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) the amount of money required for this purpose?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MISS KAMLA KUMARI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) It has been decided to create, initially, a buffer stock of 5 lakh tonnes of sugar. The buffer will be built out of the free sale sugar portion of the production of the sugar year 1981-82. The stock will be kept so quistered with the sugar mills and the share of each mill has been pro-rated to its production. Against the buffer quantity, banks will provide credit to the extent of 100 per cent. The mills will also be compensated for holding the stock by providing to them the holding cost and interest actuals at 19.5 per cent of the quarterly average of the tariff value with effect from 1st October 1982. In order to maintain the scheme and make it self-financing, it is proposed to amend (i) the Sugar Cess Act, 1982, to raise the Cess suitably and (ii) the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982, so that the scheme can be financed from out of the Cess credited to the Fund.

(c) The scheme involves an expenditure of about Rs. 49 crores per annum in addition to the higher bank credit requirement of Rs. 62.50 crores.

'Hydroponics' method of growing crops without soil

400. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware, of the invention of Luke Ferguson, a British Scientist that by using hydroponics, a method of growing plants without soil, crop yields may be increased by three to seven times;

(b) if so, whether Government have ever studied this method of growing plants in the poor soil area especially the desert lands in our country;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) The technique of hydroponics—a method of growing plants without soil—is known for a long time. Essentially, the technique consists in growing plants in nutrients solutions without soil or on gravel having elements needed by the plant. In India, this method is not used commercially or on a farm scale. The yields can be increased by this method by intensive inputs where glasshouses and other facilities are utilised. However, it is not an economically commercial proposition in this country so far.

(b) The method of growing plants under soil-less conditions requires plenty of water and has not been recommended by the scientists for growing plants under desert or dryland cultivation conditions on a large or commercial scale.

(c) and (d). This technique of hydroponics has not been experimented for large scale commercial exploitation on a farm scale. However, the scientists of the Division of Plant Physiology of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute have used hydroponics for experimental purposes only.

Co-operative societies in Assam

401. SHRI ROBIN KAKATI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state;

(a) the total number of co-operative societies of various categories in Assam that have not been audited for the last three years;

(b) the amount of loans to be repaid by various co-operative societies at the end of 1980-81, i.e.,

(i) Rural credit societies,

(ii) Fisheries co-operatives,

(iii) Industrial and artisans co-operatives,

(iv) Other co-operatives like consumers, primary marketing, weaving co-operative societies etc.

(c) the total number of various categories of co-operative societies at the end of 1980-81 and the number of societies, of which liquidation cases are pending for more than two years at the end of 1981-82; and

(d) the amount of (i) rural credits that were sanctioned and loans advanced to various categories of rural credit societies; (ii) to Industrial, (iii) Fisheries, (iv) artisans and weaving co-operative societies, and (v) to other kinds of cooperative societies the loans which were given during the last three years and grant-in-aid or subsidies which were granted to co-operative societies during the above three years?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MISS KAMLA KUMARI): (a) to (d). Information is being collected from the Government of Assam and will be placed on the Table of the Rajya Sabha as soon as the same is received.

Supply of foodgrains to Orissa

402. SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the total quantity of food grains supplied to Government of Orissa for relief operations in areas affected by the devastating floods in August-September 1982?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MISS KAMLA KUMARI): A quantity of 10000 tonnes of rice was allotted to the Government of Orissa for flood relief during September, 1982, in addition to the monthly quota of 10,000 tonnes of rice for public distribution, in the months of August and September, 1982. It is reported by the State Government that a quantity of 12,000 tonnes has been utilised for flood relief during these two months.

Per capita availability of foodgrains

403. SHRI ARABINDA GHOSH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state what was the per capita availability of foodgrains during the years 1980 and 1981?