

requirements in the country. This shortfall is met through imports. As is evident from the data below, the net domestic availability of pulses in the country during the year 2005-2006 was marginally higher as compared to the previous year:—

Availability of Pulses (Lakh Tonnes)

	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06
Domestic production	131.3	131.1*
Imports	13.39	16.08
Exports	(2.71)	(4.44)
Net domestic availability	141.98	142.74

*IVth advance Estimates.

Also, the prices of major pulses included in the basket of essential commodities (toor and gram) did not indicate any alarming trend during the year 2005-06.

The prices of pulses started increasing sharply after March, 2006. To arrest this increase in prices, the Government took a number of initiatives including restrictions on export of pulses, removal of customs duties on import of pulses and directions to NAFED to import 45,000 tonnes of pulses on Government account.

There were no restrictions on the import and export of pulses in the country prior to the current export restrictions imposed on 27th June, 2006. Exports are normally permitted to encourage value addition in the country. The average per unit price realization from export of pulses is higher than the average per unit import price, making exports profitable. Exports also provide an revenue to increase the price realization for farmers engaged in pulses cultivation.

Wheat quota for Kerala

*94. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the wheat quota for Kerala for distribution to APL and BPL card holders has been sharply cut from June onwards;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

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(c) whether the State Government was consulted before taking a decision to cut wheat quota from June onwards;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The allocation of wheat to the State of Kerala for the APL and BPL categories during 2006-07 is as follows:—

<i>Monthly Allocation (in thousand tonnes)</i>		
	April & May 2006	June, 2006 to March, 2007
APL	37.325	11.777 7.336
BPL	8.865	

The stock of wheat in the Central Pool has been below the buffer norms for the last one year mainly due to less procurement of wheat during Rabi Marketing Season 2005-06 and 2006-07. Keeping in view the dwindling stocks of wheat, a decision was taken to streamline the allocation of foodgrains under TPDS for all the States including Kerala as follows:

- (i) The allocation of wheat for Above Poverty Line (APL) category has been rationalized to each State's average offtake for the last 3 years or the last year's, offtake, whichever was lower. A 25% cut on this has been imposed in respect of rice consuming States and Delhi for APL category. However, there has been no change in the overall APL entitlements and the State Governments can ask for allocation of rice in lieu of reduction of wheat allocation under APL.
- (ii) The allocation of wheat for Below Poverty Line (BPL)/Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) category has been rationalized to each State's average offtake for the last 3 years or the existing allocation, whichever was lower. However, the overall allocation of foodgrains has remained unchanged for BPL/AAY households as the reduced wheat allocation has been made up by corresponding increase in rice allocation.

- (iii) In the case of Kerala the average monthly offtake of APL wheat was 10,912, 14,376 and 21,819 tonnes for the years 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively. The average monthly offtake for the last three years, therefore, comes to 15,702 tonnes. As per clause (i) above, a 25% cut on rice consuming States was imposed. The APL wheat for Kerala has, therefore, been calculated at 11,777 tonnes per months. As far as BPL wheat allocation is concerned, the average monthly offtake works out to 2,520, 10,205 and 9,283 tonnes for the years 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively. The average monthly offtake for the last three years comes to 7,336 tonnes as against the allocation of 8,865 tonnes during May, 2006. As per clause (ii) above, out of these two figures, the lower quantity of 7,776 tonnes per month has been allocated as BPL wheat for Kerala.

Government has not taken any decision to reduce the allocation of foodgrains under TPDS. The only decision taken in the light of dwindling wheat stocks is to change the ratio of rice and wheat while keeping the overall allocation of foodgrains under TPDS as 35 kgs per family per month. This decision will not have any impact on the food security under TPDS.

(c) to (e) Since the decision to streamline was based on average offtake by States, no State Government including Kerala was consulted by Central Government before taking such a decision with effect from June, 2006. As already mentioned, the overall allocation of foodgrains under TPDS has not been reduced and has been maintained at the same level *viz.* 35 kgs. per family per month for each category.

Shortage of ration wheat

†*95.DR. PRABHA THAKUR:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any information from different States about the shortage of wheat for rationing;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.