

Western and Eastern zone, retail prices of wheat declined at Lucknow, Patna, Thiruvananthapuram and Bangalore.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Three contracts for import of 35 lakh tonnes of wheat have been executed by the State Trading Corporation of India with foreign suppliers to meet the requirements of the Central Pool. Besides, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited has executed contract for import of 30,000 metric tonnes of pulses.

Relaxation of norms for wheat import

463. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the latest 2.2 million tonnes wheat import tender issued by the State Trading Corporation on 12th June, 2006, the quality norms and food safety standards have been significantly diluted, in allowing the presence of an increased level of certain banned quarantine weed seeds and other toxins and the exporting countries would be free to choose their sampling procedures and the extent of fumigation; and

(b) if so, the details of the relaxations made, the specific reasons/compulsions therefor and whether the imported poorer quality of wheat would be fit for human consumption?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) In the latest 2.2 million tonnes wheat import tender issued by State Trading Corporation (STC) on 12th June 2006, following norms in respect of Plant Quarantine regulations and permissible limit of Deoxynivalenol (DON) toxin and pesticide residue limit under PFA Act/Rules have been amended:

- (i) The wheat consignment would be required to be certified to contain not more than 0.01% Ergot (*Claviceps purpurea*) w/w.
- (ii) The wheat consignment would be required to be certified to contain not more than 0.005% Dwarf bunt (*Tilletia contraversa*) w/w.

- (iii) The wheat consignment would be required to be certified to contain not more than average 100 quarantine weed seeds (as per Schedule VIII of the Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 2003, as amended) per 200 Kg. of samples drawn as per the prescribed procedure.
- (iv) The wheat consignment would be required to be fumigated with Methyl Bromide @ 32 g/cu m at 21°C and above for 24 hours under normal air pressure and the treatment endorsed on the Phytosanitary Certificate or the wheat consignment would be required to be fumigated with Aluminium Phosphide for period of at least 21 days prior to arrival into India provided the ship hold has provision for post re-circulation of phosphine gas during the period of transit.
- (v) Deoxynivalenol (DON) shall not be more than 2000 micro gram per Kg. for import of wheat as per amendment made in PFA Rules, 1955.
- (vi) Tolerance limits in case of residues of 7 insecticides under PFA Rules, 1955 have been amended for import of wheat to align with the international standards/Codex limits.

The inspection and sampling procedure in respect of quarantine pests/weeds has been detailed in the tender, which is in conformity with the Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order 2003, as amended.

The amendments have been made to ensure wider participation of prospective bidders while at the same time ensuring that the quality of the imported wheat would not be inferior to the domestic wheat. These amendments therefore, would not adversely affect the suitability of the imported wheat from the point of view of human consumption.

Coastal afforestation

464. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kerala Government has submitted a project for coastal afforestation by conservation and management of mangroves and other associate plants along Kerala coast;