

Requirement of edible oils

277. SHRI N. P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) what are the steps which Government have decided to take to ensure that the prices of edible oils do not increase during the current year;

(b) what was the requirement of edible oils during the year 1977-78 and what is the estimated demand of edible oils during the year 1978-79; and

(c) what steps are being taken to fill the gap between the demand and supply of the edible oils in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR GOYAL): (a) The following are some of the important steps taken to contain the rising trends in prices of edible oils:—

(i) A restrictive monetary and credit policy;

(ii) Free inter-State movement and sale of edible oils and oilseeds;

(iii) Continuation of ban on exports of HPS Groundnuts and edible oils;

(iv) Import of sizeable quantities of rapeseed oil and sale through public distribution of the refined rapeseed oil at a price not exceeding Rs. 7½ per kg. w.e. f. 1-5-1978;

(v) Supply of imported oils to the vanaspati industry upto 75 per cent of their oil requirements;

(vi) Imposition of stock limits on dealers and commission agents in edible oils and oilseeds;

(vii) Bringing edible oils under O.G.L except palm oil.

(b) The requirement of edible oils during the oil year 1977-78 (November 77 to October 78) is approximately estimated at 34 lakh tonnes and the estimated demand for the year 1978-79 is about 35.65 lakh tonnes.

(c) The gap between the demand and supply in edible oils will be covered by imports by the State Trading Corporation and the private trade as an immediate measure. In addition, long-term and short-term measures have been evolved to raise the indigenous production of edible seeds and oils by providing incentives to farmers which, inter-alia, include:

(i) Raising the productivity per hectare both in irrigated and unirrigated areas through rapid spread of improved technology;

(ii) Increasing the area under irrigated crops by exploiting the potential under the command of new irrigated projects;

(iii) Strengthening the seed production programme by augmenting the supply of pure seed;

(iv) Stepping up the coverage by plant protection measurers, particularly by aerial spraying over large areas, wherever feasible;

(v) Fixation of support prices and making arrangements for the purchase of the produce at those prices;

(vi) Provision of subsidy on the cost of certified seed and for various plant protection operations under the Intensive Oilseeds Development Programmes and other Centrally Sponsored Schemes of the Department of Agriculture;

(vii) Extension of area under non-traditional oilseed crops, like sunflower and soyabean; and

(viii) Increasing production of oils by modern extraction methods.

Equitable distribution of essential commodities throughout the country

278. SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 153 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 28th February, 1978 and state: