

An Agriculture Summit 2005 was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) during 9-10 April, 2005 at New Delhi and was inaugurated by the Prime Minister. Experts and agriculturists attending the Summit suggested various reforms such as contract farming, public-private partnership in agriculture, use of foreign investment for retail trade of agro-based products etc. Suggestions made by experts are kept in view by the Government while formulating appropriate policies.

(c) There is no such proposal with the Government.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f) Various measures have been announced in the Union Budget 2005-06 to improve capital formation in agriculture and allied sectors. These include increase in the plan outlay of the Ministry of Agriculture by 43 per cent from Rs.4192 crore in 2004-05 (BE) to Rs.5998 crore in 2005-06 (BE), an outlay of Rs.630 crore for the National Horticulture Mission, provision of an outlay of Rs. 4800 crore for the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), provision of an outlay of Rs.400 crore for Micro Irrigation, development/strengthening of Agricultural Marketing infrastructure, grading and standardization, steps to increase credit flow to farm households by 30 per cent, introduction of the scheme of Gramin Bhandaran Yojana for storage of agricultural produce and steps for promotion of agricultural research.

Outstanding loan granted to Punjab

5013. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any loan (special term) granted to Punjab for combating insurgency is outstanding at present; and

(b) if so, the details of loans/interest outstanding as on date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As on 1st April, 2005 principal amount of Rs.3772 crore and accumulated interest of Rs.2407.40 crore are outstanding against the special term loan released to Government of Punjab for combating insurgency. There is a moratorium on recovery of this loan and interest upto March 31, 2007.