

- Adoption of integrated nutrient management and integrated pest management practices by farmers.
- Support of infrastructure including portable threshing floor and storage bins.
- Inter-cropping of guar with other important crops of the region.
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) net work research project 'Arid Legume' at Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI), Jodhpur to undertake research on improvement of guar.
- Breeder seed production of improved varieties by ICAR.

Crisis in agriculture sector

†2653. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the agriculture sector has been facing serious challenges for the last three years as well as in the current year as a consequence of which many farmers have committed suicide;

(b) if so, whether Central Government has formulated any plan to help agriculture sector to overcome this crisis and to prevent suicides by farmers;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps Government proposes to take to promote the agriculture sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Agriculture in India is primarily rain fed and occasional drought and floods in different parts of the country do pose a challenge for the agriculture sector. However, the Government has taken various measures to mitigate their adverse impact. There are many causes of suicide by farmers which include indebtedness, drought, crop failure, lack of family support, failure of social institutions and social and economic insecurity.

(b) and (c) The Government has announced the National Policy for Farmers, 2007 incorporating many recommendation of the National Commission Farmers that are aimed at the revival of Indian agriculture.

A Rehabilitation Package of Rs. 16978.69 crore was approved in 2006 covering 31 suicide prone districts in 4 States initially for a period of 3 years to address the problem of agrarian distress. The period for implementation of the non-credit components of the package has been extended by 2 more years *i.e.* up to September 30, 2011.

Implementation of the Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 has benefited about 3.69 crore farmers in the country involving an estimated amount of Rs. 65,318.33 crore.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The Government has enhanced the interest subvention for timely repayment of crop loans up to Rs. 3 lakh from 1% to 2% for the year 2010-11. Thus, the effective rate of interest for such farmers who repay their loans in time will be 5% per annum.

For the overall development of agriculture and allied sectors, assistance is being provided to farmers through various central schemes such as Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Food Security Mission, National Horticulture Mission etc.

The Government has also amended the Guidelines of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in July, 2009 permitting provision of irrigation facility, horticultural plantation and land development works on land belonging to small and marginal farmers under this scheme.

The Minimum Support Prices of major cereals have been increased substantially during the last 5 years.

(d) Does not arise in view of the reply to (a) to (c) above.

Improvement in breed of cows

†2654. SHRI OM PRAKASH MATHUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the status of cows stock across the country at present;
- (b) the State-wise details thereof; and
- (c) whether any programmes are being run by Government relating to improve the breeds of cows in western districts of Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) State-wise details of numbers of Cattle in the country as per 18th Livestock Census 2007 is given in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) In addition to the steps taken by the State Government of Rajasthan, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries is implementing a centrally sponsored scheme: 'National Project for Cattle and Buffalo Breeding' in the country including Rajasthan. The project envisages development of bovine population through genetic up-gradation on priority basis and also has focus on development and conservation of indigenous breeds.

Statement

State-wise details of Number of Cattle as per 18th Livestock Census 2007\$

Sl.No.	State/UTs	(in thousands)
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	11223

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.