

During 2010-11, so far, apart from setting up of 1 small nursery, an area of 19313 ha has been covered under area expansion of various horticulture crops and an area of 1309 ha of old and, senile orchards have been rejuvenated. An area of 914 ha has been covered under promotion of IPM and 21 Vermi compost units have been set up. Total 158 honeybee colonies with hives have been distributed so far.

Shortage of farm implements

3430. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there is a huge shortage of farm implements;
- (b) if so, whether it is also a fact that most, of these implements are now being imported; and
- (c) if so, the steps being taken to enable manufacture of these implements in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The Ministry is not aware of any empirical evidences or reports that indicate that there is a huge shortage of farm implements.

Currently, a large number of small and medium scale industries in the country are engaged in manufacturing a large variety of farm tools and implements. These indigenous farm tools and implements that are commercially available all over the country can cater to majority of the agricultural needs.

However, a few sophisticated and special purpose agricultural machineries like sugarcane harvesters, cotton pickers, paddy transplanters etc. are currently imported in the open market as per demands arising from specific areas.

(c) Since, unorganized and small scale manufacturing enterprises dominate this sector, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and its associate institutions have been regularly conducting entrepreneurship development programme with an objective to empower these manufacturers. Further, ICAR is also partnering with them to develop and customize new products in the field of farm implements. Besides, under the Central Sector Scheme "Promotion and Strengthening of Agricultural Mechanization through Training, Testing & Demonstration" assistance

is provided to State Governments, ICAR and other Central/State Government Organizations for organizing demonstration of newly developed or improved equipment among the farmers for creating awareness and for helping induction of new technology in agricultural production system.

Seed Banks

3431. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Seed Banks are in operation in various States;
- (b) if so, the aims and objectives of Seed Banks;
- (c) to what extent Seed Banks are helping farmers in States, particularly Andhra Pradesh for distribution of seeds at right time and at an affordable price; and
- (d) how the National Seeds Corporation is helping the State Seed Banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Seed Banks are functioning in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and through the National Seeds Corporation (NSC) and the States Farms Corporation of India (SFCI). The objective of the seed bank is to meet the requirement of seeds in situations of natural calamities and unforeseen condition like drought, floods etc. The coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh are prone to cyclones and floods every year. Most of the seed kept in Seed Banks utilized in such exigencies. The Andhra Pradesh State Seeds Development Corporation Ltd. distributes seeds at affordable prices as approved by the State Government.

(d) NSC is participating in the Seed Bank Scheme. It maintains specific quantity of certified and foundation seed as per allocation made by the Government of India and supplies the same to the needy States in consultation with the Department in unforeseen situations. Special attention is given for meeting the seed demand in the North Eastern States.

Central assistance to drought affected areas

3432. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: