

& Statistics, the annual production of foodgrains is 232.07 million tones in the year 2010-11 against the corresponding demand of 229.12 million tones in the country. Import of rice and wheat on Government account was not undertaken during last two years and current year.

(c) and (d) Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture do not maintain data on diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes such as urbanization, roads, industries, housing etc. With a view to prevent land degradation and to maintain balance in various types of land uses, Government of India is implementing various Watershed Development Programmes namely; National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA), Soil Conservation in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR), Reclamation and Development of Alkali & Acid Soils (RADAS), Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSA), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) etc. across the country.

Protection of fertile land

951. SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farm commodities should be 50 per cent higher than well calculated input costs to enable farm families to earn out a decent living;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that farmers' organizations had demanded a new Act to protect the fertile land; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARUN YADAV): (a) and (b) The National Commission on Farmers under the Chairmanship of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan had recommended that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) should be atleast 50% more than the weighed average cost of production. This recommendation, however, has not been accepted by the Government because MSP is recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Cost and Prices (CACP) based on objective criteria and considering variety of relevant factors. Hence, prescribing an increasing of at least 50% on cost may distort market. A mechanical linkage between MSP and cost of production may be counter-productive in some cases.

The Government fixes the MSPs for agricultural produce, inter-alia, taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the views of concerned State Governments and Central Ministries. The CACP, while formulating its recommendations on price policy considers, inter-alia, a number of factors which include cost of production, changes in input prices, input/output price parity, trends in market prices, demand and supply situation, inter-crop price parity, effect on industrial cost structure, effect on general price level, effect on cost of living, suggestions received from farmers/others etc.

The Government's Price policy (MSP) for agricultural commodities seeks to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce with a view to encourage higher investment and production, and to safeguard the interest of consumers by making available supplies at reasonable prices.

(c) Representations have been received from various organizations from time to time regarding protection of fertile land etc.

(d) Government has notified the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy-2007 on 31st October, 2007. This policy provides that as far as possible, projects may be set up on wasteland, degraded land or un-irrigated land. Acquisition of agricultural land for non-agricultural use in the project may be kept to the minimum; multi-cropped land may be avoided to the extent possible for such purposes, and acquisition of irrigated land, if unavoidable, may be kept to the minimum.

Horticulture Mission in Himachal Pradesh

†952. SHRIMATI BIMLA KASHYAP SOOD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that with a view to boost horticulture in the country, Government has set up National Horticulture Mission;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of the States which are to be given priority in the mission;

(d) whether considering the geographical and environmental conditions of Himachal Pradesh, any special project has been developed or proposed to be developed there under this mission; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.