

1	2	3
Tomato	12424.9	12900.0
Peas	3011.0	3137.0
Cauliflower	6403.0	6511.0
Beans	494.1	782.1
Carrot	305.4	308.9
Banana	27142.0	27862.0
Apple	1772.0	2402.0

Source: NHB, DAC

(e) and (f) The retail prices of fruits and vegetables depend upon a large number of factors primarily the demand - supply position, cost of transportation, cost of cold storage, etc. The most effective measure for stabilizing retail price of horticulture products is to establish good Post Harvest Management infrastructure in the country for which Department of Agriculture and Cooperation provides assistance under National Horticulture Mission and Horticulture Mission for North-East and Himalayan States (HMNEH).

With a view to contain the prices of horticulture products especially onion, Government have taken a number of steps including raising the minimum export price (MEP) of onion from US\$ 275 PMT to US\$ 1200 PMT from September 2010 to December, 2010. Further, from 22nd December, 2010 export of onion was banned and duty free imports of onion were allowed to enhance domestic supply. To give relief to consumers, Government started distribution of onion through NAFED and other agencies in Delhi during January, 2011 at a subsidized rate. In the second week of February 2011 a decision has been taken by the Government to remove ban on export varieties like Bangalore Rose and Krishnapuram onion as these are not domestically consumed, cannot be stored for long periods and moreover farmers are adversely affected by the ban. Recently, the Government has taken a decision to totally remove the ban on export of all varieties of onions in view of the improved arrivals and falling prices of onions across the country and reduced the MEP to US \$ 600 per metric ton.

Investment in agriculture for research and development

488. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Working Group on Agriculture Production, set up by Prime Minister with Chief Ministers of Punjab, Bihar, Haryana and West Bengal has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the main features of the report; and

(c) the conscious and consistent measures taken by Government to set up both public and private investment in agriculture, especially in Research and Development, which has been stagnating for years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
(SHRI ARUN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Working Group on Agriculture production was to deliberate on and recommend measures for increasing agriculture production and productivity including long-term policies for sustained agricultural growth.

A summary of major recommendations of the Group is given in Statement (*See below*).

(c) Government has taken up a number of programmes in agriculture including agriculture research and education. During Eleventh Plan, the outlay of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation for development programmes is Rs. 66577 crore. These programmes not only result in public investment by Government, of India but incentivises/encourages investment by State Governments and the private sector. Plan outlay of Department of Agriculture for year 2010-11 is Rs.17254 crore (RE). Major development programmes include Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Horticulture Mission (NHM), Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA), Development and Strengthening of Infrastructure Facilities for Production and Distribution of Quality Seeds, Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms, Gramin Bhandaran Yojana, Strengthening and Modernisation of Pest Management Approach, National Project on Soil Health and Fertility, National Project on Promotion of Organic Farming, Integrated Scheme on Oil seeds, Pulses, Oil palm and Maize Development (ISOPOM), Micro Irrigation, etc.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research takes measures for enhancement of region specific research and development activities in agriculture. The plan expenditure of the Council has been Rs.1760 crore in the years 2008-09 (RE) and 2009-10 (RE).

Statement

Major Recommendations of Working Group on Agriculture Production

1. **Bridge the horizontal and vertical gaps in yield** by ascertaining these through specific studies and address them through appropriate interventions like timely sowing, balanced use of fertilizers and soil ameliorants, improving water use efficiency etc.
2. **Expansion of area under *boro* (winter) rice** by increasing cropping intensity especially in the states of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal. (*Extending Green Revolution to Eastern India programme launched to address this*)

3. Assam should also be included in the Extending Green Revolution to Eastern India programme. (*included*)
4. As electric power is unlikely to be available to the extent required, it is necessary to assist farmers partly in meeting higher cost of diesel pumping sets for lifting water in eastern states. A scheme on the lines of Diesel Subsidy Scheme of Bihar should be launched in other States also.
5. Undertake an ambitious time bound programme of ground water use through bore-wells, shallow wells and lift irrigation schemes in eastern India.
6. Additional investments are required to maintain canals and to fund research on conjunctive use of brackish water with canal water.
7. Develop and upscale integrated farming systems including crops, horticulture, livestock etc. to generate both on-farm and off-farm employment for small and marginal farmers.
8. Include short duration summer mung-bean varieties under zero tillage in areas under irrigated cereal production systems of the country, and Reintroduce pulses in sugarcane production systems areas. In eastern India, relay cropping of zero till planting of winter legumes (lentil, chickpea etc.) should be focussed in 'rice-fallows'.
9. Promote production of hybrid seed aggressively and provide incentives to Private Sector.
10. Improve seed replacement rate of oilseed crops. Popularise Cyto-plasmic Male Sterility (CPM) based hybrids as they promise substantial productivity enhancement. Superior sunflower hybrids should be developed and promoted in northern India. In castor, special focus is required for the development of hybrids and varieties resistant to abiotic stresses such as drought and salinity.
11. State Seed Corporations should either be reformed/re-organized to make them vibrant organisations or should be closed to allow development of alternative mechanisms.
12. Fertiliser companies should produce right kind of mixtures of nutrients to suit the specific requirements of soils in all agro-climatic zones. Target to bring at least 10% area under bio-fertiliser application. Encourage use of liquid fertilisers.
13. There is need to create appropriate pesticide/ bio-pesticide quality control set up and to provide deterrent punishment for the sale of spurious pesticides.

14. New irrigation technologies like furrow irrigation, mulching, drip and sprinkler irrigation etc. need to be promoted as a national priority. Micro irrigation systems (*i.e.* drip and sprinkler) must be promoted as a matter of priority in both canal command and rainfed areas. *In situ* water conservation is the best solution for stability and sustainability of agriculture, and improving yields of crops in the rainfed areas.
15. Institutional development across States is a priority area for equitable flow of credit. Credit should be made available at not more than 4% per annum rate of interest.
16. Farm mechanisation is not only necessary for increasing productivity, but has become essential in view of emerging labour shortage and needs considerable support from Government. A Technology Mission on Farm Mechanisation should be started.
17. Encourage establishment of agri-business centres by Self Help Groups to purchase, maintain and provide farm machinery to farmers under custom hiring.
18. All types of tools, implements, machinery and equipment should be allowed to be freely imported without any import duty.
19. States may consider taking up segregation of feeders for dedicated availability of power to agriculture sector and making power available in un-served areas especially in eastern India.
20. Much needed emphasis to encourage use of solar, biomass and wind power in agriculture is required. It will be highly desirable to initiate a National programme on Harnessing Bio-energy in Agriculture.
21. A time bound programme to fill up existing vacancies in all KVKs and Extension Directorates should be prepared and implemented.
22. Train and Develop Technology Agents through vocational training at State Agricultural Universities for establishment of Agri-Clinics.
23. It is necessary to bring in private sector investments for developing marketing infrastructure to give better choices to farmers and for developing more efficient supply chain for better handling of agriculture produce.
24. System of Spot Electronic Trading, one of the biggest institutional reforms in agriculture marketing system, needs to be institutionalised.

25. Funds available under the Scheme 'Gramin Bhandaran Yojana' should be fully utilised to create a network of rural godowns in the country.
26. Methodology of calculating costs of cultivation of Commission for Agriculture Cost and Prices (CACP) must be reviewed in the context of need to provide economic and remunerative prices to the farmers. The Working Group supports acceptance of the National Commission on Farmers' report suggesting 50% higher price over the actual cost of cultivation or adoption of Bureau of Industrial Cost and Prices (BICP) formula used for estimating industrial costs.
27. Minimum Support Price (MSP) for vegetables, especially Potato, Onion and Garlic, should also be fixed by GOI.
28. Market for agricultural produce must be immediately freed of all sorts of restrictions on movement, trading, stocking, finance, exports etc. No monopoly, including that of APMCs or corporate licensees, should be allowed.
29. Agriculture land ceiling for corporates could be fixed at 25 times the ceiling for individual farmers.
30. Proper policy should be put in place for land lease and contract farming. Guidelines need to be chalked out for contract farming/leasing, to ensure that the rights of both land owner and tenant are safeguarded.
31. Indian companies can be encouraged to buy lands in foreign countries for producing pulses and oilseeds under long term supply contracts to Indian canalising agencies.
32. A consolidation exercise should be taken up by the Planning Commission to convert existing CSSs into a few focussed schemes.
33. From the Twelfth Plan, it will be advisable to extend the NFSM to cover all the districts of wheat producing States. Crops such as maize and coarse cereals (sorghum and bajra) should be included in NFSM.
34. Entire statistical system needs to be revamped to cover all crops and to increase accuracy of data collection and elimination of higher or lower bias.
35. A national system of collecting and monitoring identified weather parameters should be developed and put in place using RKVY and other funds. Market information along with daily weather conditions should be provided to the farmers using modern ICT tools and techniques (SMS, Panchayat e-services, FM radio, AIR, TV etc.).

36. The States may consider setting up separate Universities of Veterinary and Animal Sciences. Union Government should also set up a Livestock Mission.
37. Efforts to promote use of plastics in agricultural operations should be encouraged.
38. A coordination mechanism for Ministries of Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Public Distribution, Irrigation, Fertilisers and Power in the Central/State Government is urgently needed. A Scientific Advisory Council on Agriculture should be created under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister.
39. States may consider bringing all agriculture and allied sector related production programmes under the Agriculture Production Commissioner, for coordinating with other allied departments.
40. A comprehensive policy for insurance coverage of all important food crops and live stock needs to be put in place on priority and the same should be implemented with additional funding support from the Centre, with village as a unit instead of the Block.
41. Norms of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) should be revised and the compensation for the loss of crops due to natural calamities like flood/drought/frost should be enhanced to at least Rs. 25,000 per hectare.
42. A massive effort for building modern silos to arrest post harvest losses of foodgrains is needed at the national level through both public and private sector interventions as a national priority.
43. In addition to use of location-specific technology, suitable policy initiatives in terms of insurance, preferential credit, strengthening infrastructure and extension services are also needed for climate proofing rainfed agriculture.
44. A Second Green Revolution focusing on the Rainfed areas is possible only through a technological breakthrough in the use of bio-technology to strengthen conventional breeding methodology by evolving plant varieties resistant to pest and diseases, tolerant to adverse weather conditions, better nutritional value and enhanced durability of product.
45. A National Mission for Development of Rainfed Agriculture should be established with defined outcomes and convergence with line Ministries/ Departments and State Governments.

Pension and family insurance scheme for farmers

489. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: