

annual premium of this insurance is shared between the Central and State Government. In the case of Union Territories the entire premium amount is borne by the Central Government.

Cold storages in rural areas

485. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has put in place an action plan for providing chain of cold storages in rural areas to help the farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of cold storages proposed to be constructed in rural Maharashtra, particularly to benefit the onion growers of the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HARISH RAWAT): (a) and (b) The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation is implementing National Horticulture Mission (NHM) since 2005-06 and Horticulture Mission for North Eastern and Himalayan States (HMNEH) since 2001-02 for holistic development of horticulture, which includes post harvest management infrastructure including cold storages, controlled atmosphere storages and refrigerated transport. Similarly National Horticulture Board (NHB) since 1999-2000 is implementing Scheme for construction/expansion/modernization of cold storages/storages, controlled atmosphere storage for horticulture produce and refrigerated van/containers and specialized transport vehicle.

Besides, Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), National Cooperative Development Corporation and Ministry of Food Processing are also implementing schemes for development of cold chain in the country.

(c) Cold Storages are not preferred for storage of onion. The storage of onion is done in ventilated storage. Assistance is provided for setting up of ventilated storage in onion growing Districts. An assistance of Rs. 59.78 lakh has been provided for setting up of 215 ventilated onion storages with capacity of 5375 MT under NHM scheme. State Government of Maharashtra under its marketing board scheme has provided an assistance of Rs. 4986.00 lakh for 17866 onion storages with capacity of 425000 MT. A target of 1000 MT of ventilated storages in onion growing Districts of Maharashtra has been fixed during current year under the ongoing programmes of NHM.

Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act

486. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to bring fresh amendments to the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act;

(b) whether it is a fact that an innovative legislation originally designed to protect farmers from exploitative traders, the APMC Act implemented as a national model in the 70s' is now being blamed for rising vegetable prices;

(c) whether APMC laws make it mandatory for farmers to sell all produce through local committees;

(d) whether it is a fact that most APMCs harbour monopolistic practices; and

(e) if so, by when the APMC Act would be amended to provide more teeth to it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HARISH RAWAT):

(a) As 'Agriculture Marketing' is a State subject, States/Union Territories have their own Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act. However, in order to facilitate better price realization to the farmers through improved and alternative marketing channels, enhance investment in development of post-harvest marketing infrastructure and reduce the marketing cost and post-harvest losses, the Ministry of Agriculture prepared a model APMC Act and circulated it to all the States/Union Territories in 2003 for their consideration and adoption. It is, therefore, for State Governments to make amendments in their APMC Act for effecting market reforms.

(b) Several factors, such as, supply and demand of the produce, income and preference of consumers, international prices, status of marketing channels, etc., affect the prices of agriculture produce, including vegetables.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) The APMCs are required to ensure smooth and orderly development of agriculture marketing by ensuring competition and fair play of trade practices and market forces. The Model APMC Act provides for more efficient and competitive marketing channels to the producers. The Ministry of Agriculture has been pursuing the States/UTs to make amendments in their APMC Acts on the lines of Model Act.

Sluggish agricultural growth

487. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is investing progressively less in agriculture whereas investment by the private sector is growing at a faster pace;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this has not led to increase in productivity;

(c) whether it is a fact that growth of agriculture, targeted to grow at 4 per cent in the Eleventh Five Year Plan, has been sluggish; and

(d) if so, the steps Government is going to take to raise food supply to meet the rising demands?