

- (d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) There is a limited number of studies on the impact of genetically modified crops on soil microbial activities. However, studies conducted at the Central Institute for Cotton Research and Indian Institute of Soil Science have not detected any toxic effect of Bt. cotton in soil on the resident soil micro flora.

- (c) No, Sir. The requirement of pesticides is actually less in Bt. cotton.

- (d) Does not arise.

MSP for paddy and pulses

*118. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has sought over 15 per cent hike in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy over the previous year;

- (b) if so, the details of MSP sought for various types of paddy;

- (c) whether the Ministry is also pushing for a hike in the MSP of pulses to boost their production which falls short of domestic consumption; and

- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Government has fixed the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of various kharif crops for 2012-13 Season, including for Common and Grade A varieties of Paddy. MSP of Common variety of paddy has been increased by 15.7 per cent over its MSP for 2011-12 and of Grade A variety of paddy by 15.3% over its MSP for 2011-12. The MSPs of both the varieties of paddy for 2011-12 and 2012-13 are given in the Table below:—

(Rs. per quintal)

Year	MSP for Common variety of Paddy	MSP for Grade A variety of Paddy
2011-12	1080	1110
2012-13	1250	1280
% age increase over 2011-12	15.7	15.3

(c) and (d) MSPs of Arhar (Tur), Moong and Urad have been increased by 20.3%, 25.7% and 30.3% respectively over their MSPs for 2011-12. The MSPs of kharif pulses for 2011-12 and 2012-13 are given in the Table below:—

(Rs. per quintal)

Commodity	2011-12*	2012-13	%age increase over 2011-12
Arhar (Tur)	3200	3850	20.3
Moong	3500	4400	25.7
Urad	3300	4300	30.3

*Additional incentive at the rate of Rs. 500 per quintal was payable during the harvest/arrival period of two months.

Government implements a number of schemes to boost the production of pulses in the country which include, *inter-alia*, National Food Security Mission — Pulses (NFSM-Pulses), Accelerated Pulses Production Programme, Integrated Development of 60,000 Pulses villages in Rainfed Areas, etc.

Policy for development of agriculture sector

†*119. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that people are losing interest in making agriculture a better option for their livelihood, thereby affecting agriculture sector;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has formulated any policy for development of agriculture sector and making cultivation a better option for livelihood; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) No, Sir. The total number of cultivators and agricultural labourers has been increasing since 1951. Similarly, the total cropped area has also been increasing. Further, private investment in agriculture and allied sector (at 2004-05 prices) has also increased from Rs. 59,909 crore in 2004-05 to Rs. 1,09,742 crore in 2009-10. The agriculture sector consequently has grown at an average of 3.3% per annum in the Eleventh Five Year Plan as compared to 2.3% per annum during the Tenth Plan. Foodgrain production has also increased from 217.28 million tonnes in 2006-07 to 257.44 million tonnes in 2011-12.

Government has been implementing various programmes/schemes to reinvigorate the agriculture sector and has initiated measures including reorientation of agriculture policy with the objective of improving productivity, profitability and economic viability of farming as also creating employment opportunities in rural non-farm sector. Some of the important initiatives taken by Government are launching of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Horticulture Mission

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.