

(d) In order to minimize the use of pesticides to prevent and manage the insect pests/diseases attack as well as to increase the crop productivity Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture & Co-Operation (DAC) is implementing a scheme “Strengthening and Modernization of Pest Management Approach in India” since 1991-92 by adopting Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as the main plank of plant protection strategy in overall crop production programme. Under the ambit of IPM programme, the Govt. of India has established 31 Central IPM Centres in 28 States and one UT to implement IPM.

The mandate of these Centres is pest/disease monitoring, production and release of bio-control agents/ bio-pesticides, conservation of bio-control agents and Human Resource Development in IPM by imparting training to Agriculture/ Horticulture Extension Officers and farmers at Grass Root Level by organizing Farmers Field Schools (FFSs) in farmers' fields. Basic aim of FFS is to train the farmers on the latest IPM technology so that they are able to take decision in pest management operation. In FFSs the farmers are also trained about the judicious use of pesticides on their crops so that the crop can be grown with minimum use of pesticides.

Sowing cost of Bt. Cotton

1436. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that sowing of Bt. cotton is proving very costly to farmers in the country;
- (b) whether there have been cases of suicide by the aggrieved farmers;
- (c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and Union Territory-wise during last three years; and
- (d) the action plan of Government to address their grievances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HARISH RAWAT): (a) Higher cost of cultivation of Bt. Cotton as compared to non-Bt. Cotton is nullified by less use of pesticide/insecticides in case of Bt. Cotton. Consequently, at present (2011-12) almost 90% of the total area under cotton is cultivated by Bt. Cotton.

(b) to (d) Reasons of suicide by farmers as reported by State Government are manifold which, *inter-alia*, include, indebtedness, crop failure, drought, socio-economic and personal reasons. Numerous measures taken by Government of India to prevent suicide, improve financial condition and to overcome indebtedness of the farmers include implementation of Rehabilitation Package in 31 districts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra, implementation of Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, increasing credit flow to agricultural sector, providing Kissan Credit Cards and providing interest rate subvention for timely payment on crop loans. In addition, yearly announcement of Minimum Support Prices (MSP) and providing Microfinance through apex institutions are some of the other ways to help the farmers of the country.

Harmful effects of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on foodgrains

†1437. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the grains, fruits or vegetables become injurious to the health of human beings or the life of animals, birds with the usage of chemical fertilizers or pesticides;

(b) whether the process of ripening fruits with chemical pesticides or through artificial methods contaminates such foodgrains and fruits, which are injurious to the health of human beings or any other creatures; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HARISH RAWAT): (a) No, Sir. The pesticides used as per approved label claims under the Insecticides Act, 1968 do not pose the problem of contamination of food grains with high level of pesticide (above tolerance limit). The pesticides are registered by the Registration Committee constituted under Section - 5 of the Insecticides Act, 1968, after thorough evaluation of data submitted by the applicant alongwith the application for registration on various parameters such as chemistry, toxicity, bio-efficacy and packaging to ensure efficacy and safety.

(b) and (c) The Plant Growth Regulators (PGRs) approved for ripening/post harvest treatments are not injurious to health, if used as per approved label claims.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.