

Contingency strategies cover monsoon delays upto 2, 4, 6 and 8 weeks and include changes in crop and/or variety preferably of short or medium duration based on length of growing season and cropping sequence followed in the district.

(c) The plans do contain changes in cropping pattern/varieties even in paddy growing states if there is a significant delay in monsoon rains or delay in release of irrigation water. These changes are highly location specific depending on the cropping pattern in the district. But in some states/districts with transplanted paddy as the main crop, only change in varieties is suggested as change in cropping pattern is not possible in that situation except for rabi.

(d) and (e) In all the agro-advisories issued by the Agricultural Universities, the details of short duration varieties to be grown due to deficit rainfall are provided in their websites and also through local media and television channels particularly in deficit rainfall states.

Measures to control suicide by farmers

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

(a) whether Government proposes to work out certain measures to control suicide among farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action plan to grant interest-free loans to the poor farmers; and

(d) the action plan to provide other kinds of help to poor marginalized farmers to help them financially or otherwise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) to (d) Measures taken by Government to control suicide among farmers include, *inter-alia*, implementation of Rehabilitation Package in identified districts, provision of various inputs and support services, increase in credit flow to agriculture sector, interest subvention on crop loan, debt waiver, debt relief, enhancement in Minimum Support Price of agricultural commodities, development of storage and marketing infrastructure etc., as per guidelines under the relevant scheme(s).

National Policy for Farmers (NPF) 2007, acknowledges the preponderance of small and marginal holdings in the country. NPF envisages farming activity becoming more viable and the economic condition of farmers improving on a sustainable basis. Major provisions of NPF comprise various asset reforms (land, water, livestock etc.) to empower farmers, development of support services (credit, insurance, extension, prices and marketing etc.) and creation of opportunities for non-farm employment for farm households. Accordingly, specific steps have been identified and incorporated in the plan of action for operationalization of NPF.

Loan at lower interest rate for dairy profession

†796.DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government provides agro loans at 3 per cent interest rate to farmers for agricultural purposes whereas there is no concession in the interest on loans for dairy profession even though it is complementary to agriculture;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to provide loans at lower interest rate to farmers especially in Madhya Pradesh for purchasing cattle?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. CHARAN DAS MAHANT): (a) and (b) Government of India provides interest subvention at 2% per annum to Public Sector Banks (PSBs), Co-operative Banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) on their own funds used for short term crop loan upto Rs. 3.00 lakh per farmer provided the lending institutions make available short term credit at the ground level at 7% per annum to farmers. An additional interest subvention at 3% is available to the prompt paying, farmers. Thus, the prompt paying borrower/farmer would get short term crop loans at 4% per annum. However, this benefit of interest subvention is not available for Dairy even though it is complementary to agriculture.

(c) The Department of Animals Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries does not have any scheme to provide loans at lower interest rate to farmers for purchasing cattle. However, the Department is implementing "Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme" (DEDS) through National Bank for Agriculture and Rural

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.