

An Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) has visited the State to assess crop damage/loss due to drought. Report of the IMCT is awaited.

National mission on crop diversification

†4044. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government has implemented national mission on crop diversification in the country;
- (b) if so, whether a fund of Rs. 500 crore has been set up under this mission;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the action plan Government has decided to implement under the said mission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) to (d) An amount of Rs. 500 crore has been allocated in the Budget for 2013-14 to start a programme of Crop Diversification in original Green Revolution States of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh. The programme would promote technological innovation and encourage farmers to choose crop alternatives to ensure long-term sustainability of agriculture in the North-West region of the country.

Food scarcity due to drought

4045. SHRI KIRANMAY NANDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has any estimate of the food scarcity caused due to drought in the country;
- (b) if so, the steps Government proposes to overcome the food scarcity caused due to drought; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) to (c) There is no shortage or scarcity of foodgrains in the wake of drought in some parts of the country during 2012-13.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Government makes additional allocation of foodgrains to the States/Union Territories (UTs) over and above normal allocation under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), for relief in the wake of natural calamities viz. floods, drought, earthquake etc. at economic cost or open sale rates whichever is less, with immediate effect. Such allocations are made post event on the request of States/UTs or the recommendation of Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCT) constituted by the nodal Ministries after assessment of actual damage to the crops and requirement of foodgrains.

There is stock of 596.75 lakh tones of foodgrains (rice and wheat) in the Central Pool as on 01.04.2013 which is sufficient to meet the requirement of TPDS, other welfare schemes and any other special contingencies in the country.

Negative impact of chemical fertilizers

†4046. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that usage of chemical fertilizers in agriculture in the country has negatively effected the agriculture land and water utilization;
- (b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;
- (c) whether a proposal of suggestions has been made by Government to save the farmers from this negative effect; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) and (b) There is no scientific evidence of deterioration of land with judicious use of chemical fertilizers. However, indiscriminate and imbalanced use of fertilizers coupled with low addition of organic matter over years may result in to micronutrient deficiencies and deterioration of soil health.

There is possibility of nitrate contamination in ground water due to excessive use of nitrogenous fertilizers particularly in light textured soils.

The Government is promoting balanced use of fertilizers through soil test based judicious use of chemical fertilizers in conjunction with organic manures, use of customized fertilizers etc. to minimize adverse effect on the agricultural land and ground water.

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