

(c) the remedial measures taken by Government to promote organic fertilizers in Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) and (b) Under Ministry of Agriculture, there are no specific programmes/schemes for reclamation and development of wasteland into fertile land. However, under Ministry of Rural Development, three area development programmes namely, Drought Prone Areas Programmes (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) are implemented on watershed basis. These three programmes have been integrated and consolidated into a single modified programme called Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) for development of rainfed/degraded areas *w.e.f.* 26.2.2009.

(c) Although promotion of organic fertilizer is not State specific, but Government is already promoting use of organic fertilizers through following scheme:—

- (i) Under National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF), financial assistance and encouragement of production and use of organic inputs through Capital Investment Subsidy for setting up of Fruits and Vegetables Wastes/Agro Wastes Compost Production Units is provided through NABARD in the form of credit-linked back ended subsidy @ 33% of total financial outlay or Rs. 60.00 lakh, whichever is less.
- (ii) Under National Horticulture Mission (NHM) financial assistance is provided for setting up of vermi-compost units @ 50% of the cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 30,000/- per beneficiary.

Need to improve soil health and nutrient value

1244. SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken note of the increasing desertification and its impact on agriculture;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has taken any step to improve the soil health and its nutrient value;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and

- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. As per the Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India published by Department of Space, Government of India (2007), about 25% of the geographical area of the country is affected by desertification in the country which directly impacts the people in terms of vulnerability to food shortage, natural disasters and depletion of natural resources. Government of India is aware of such an impact and, therefore, with a view to mitigate adverse impact of land degradation/desertification, increasing the productivity of agricultural land and sustaining foodgrain production, Ministry of Agriculture is implementing various Schemes/Programmes namely; National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF), National Project on Management of Soil Health and Fertility (NPMSH&F), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA) Scheme, Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) etc. for promotion of organic farming and integrated nutrient management through judicious use of chemical fertilizer, organic manure and bio-fertilizer for improving soil health and its fertility across the country.

Remunerative price for onion growers

1245. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that recently prices of onion increased abnormally resulting in panic reaction from Central and State Governments;

- (b) if so, the details thereof;

- (c) whether Central Government is aware that the abnormal rise in prices of onion was due to speculations and the onion growers did not get remunerative prices; and

- (d) if so, the remedial measures Government proposes to take to ensure that onion growers get remunerative prices for their produce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) to (c) Monthly Wholesale Price Index (WPI) (Base Year 2004-05=100) for onion for the period January, 2012 to January, 2013 indicates that there is a mixed trend from January, 2012 to September, 2012 thereafter a sharp