

of about 51,00,000 buffaloes in five years to obtain 5,61,000 MT of meat required for five-year exports and dung of equal number of buffaloes in five years total to 1377 lakh tons could be converted into 2754 lakh tons of organic manure adequate for 918 lakh acres of agricultural land?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. CHARAN DAS MAHANT): (a) No such study has been undertaken on effects of slaughtering of animals on manure production.

(b) No, Sir.

Conversion of land for agricultural use

†11. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a matter of serious concern that out of the total 3,28,725 thousand hectares of geographical area of the country, 1,46,820 thousand hectares of land has become unfit for agriculture;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the said land can be converted into agricultural land;

(d) the steps taken to control soil erosion and the results thereof; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) to (c) No, Sir. As per available estimates of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR-2010), out of total geographical area of 328.73 million hectare, about 120.40 million hectare are affected by various kind of land degradation across the country. Soil formation and its erosion are a natural phenomena occurring simultaneously. Such soil erosion leads to land degradation in upper reaches of the river system, whereas when deposited at various locations of river systems, it may increase the soil fertility.

(d) and (e) With a view to conserve top soil and prevent soil erosion and land degradation, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture is implementing various watershed Development programmes, namely National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas, Soil Conservation in Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River and Reclamation and Development of Alkali and Acid Soils across the country. Ministry of Rural Development is also implementing a major Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWPM) for restoring ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded lands in the country. Parts of such

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

developed degraded lands have been put to cultivation, leading to net sown area remaining largely unchanged in last two decades.

Quality of Bt. cotton seeds

12. SHRI PALVAI GOVARDHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the quality of Bt. Cotton seeds has come down and as a result the use of pesticides has gone up;

(b) whether it is also a fact that due to (a) above, diseases have become rampant in the cotton farms;

(c) if so, the steps Government is taking to address this problem and how will it ensure that seed companies produce quality seeds of Bt. Cotton; and

(d) the monitoring mechanism Government has to ensure quality seeds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Due to wide scale adoption of Bt. Cotton, use of pesticide has come down and there is no evidence of any disease becoming rampant.

(c) and (d) In order to check the quality of Bt. Cotton seeds, Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur has developed kits to detect seed quality of Bt. Cotton and constantly updating ELISA, farmer-usable-dipsticks and DNA based PCR tests for the Bt-genes that are approved for Bt. cotton in India. The Bt. referral laboratory at CICR also provides training to the seed testing officials and also provides services for quality testing.

Demand to fix MSP at 50 per cent more than the cultivation cost

13. DR. K.P. RAMALINGAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a demand to fix MSP at fifty per cent more than the cultivation cost;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government is considering to the said demand; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) to (d) National Commission on Farmers (NCF) under the