

Installation of ineffective anti-hail guns in Shimla

2794. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ineffective Anti hail guns have been installed in apple belt of Shimla in Himachal Pradesh without scientific evaluation and against the norms;

(b) if so, the reasons for installing such hail guns which is not a trust worthy technique and action taken against the concerned officials who have misused public money;

(c) whether Government will remove these guns in near future and provide Anti-Hail Nets to the apple growers on subsidised rates; and

(d) if so, whether State Government had sent any proposal in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) to (d) Government of Himachal Pradesh had sought assistance for installing Anti-hail guns for protecting apple crop from hailstorm during 2008-09. Department of Agriculture and Cooperation approved Rs. 3.00 crore for installation of Anti hail guns on pilot basis. Consequently, State Horticulture Department installed Hail Control System at 3 selected sites viz. Deori Ghat (Tehsil Rohru), Kathasu (Tehsil Jubbal) and Tumru (Khara Pathar) in Shimla district during 2010-11.

Further, Government of Himachal Pradesh sought assistance of Rs. 284 crore for installing 300 anti hail guns and 30 radars during 2011-12. After receipt of the proposal, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation constituted a committee comprising of members from Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Indian Meteorological Department, Government of Himachal Pradesh, Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF) and representative of apple growers association to assess the effectiveness of the existing anti hail guns in Himachal Pradesh. Based on the observations of the committee, Government of Himachal Pradesh has been suggested to take action on the following points:

- (i) to designate a Nodal Officer to monitor the existing hail control system;
- (ii) to provide uninterrupted power supply to the system besides deploying 24×7 manpower at the sites;

- (iii) to undertake a study by the scientists of UHF, Solan, Himachal Pradesh and Department of Horticulture jointly, and
- (iv) to continue the prevalent method of protecting apple crops from hail by using anti hail nets.

As reported by Government of Himachal Pradesh, the orchardists in these areas have shown mixed reaction on the effectiveness of the anti hail guns.

Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is implementing Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEH), under which assistance is provided for anti hail nets @ 50% of the cost of Rs. 20 per sq. m limited to 5000 sq.m per beneficiary to protect horticulture crops including apple from hails.

Oil palm farming

2795. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that interventions by the Technology Missions on Oil Seeds have failed to keep pace with demand of oil seeds production over the last 25 years;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the concrete steps taken by Government to push oil palm farming in the country for enhancing edible oil production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) and (b) Due to the interventions under Technology Mission on Oilseeds (TMOP), the production of oilseeds increased from 112.70 lakhs tonnes in 1986-87 to 324.80 lakhs tonnes in 2010-11. The productivity of oilseeds increased from 605 kg. per ha. to 1193 kg. per ha. during the same period. Consequently, the domestic production of edible oils also increased from 33.19 lakhs tonnes in 1986-87 to 97.82 lakhs tonnes in 2010-11. However, growth in production has not matched growth in consumption, which has increased from 5.0 Kgs. of edible oil per capita per year in 1986-87 to 13.6 Kgs. in 2010-11.

(c) In order to promote Oil Palm cultivation in the Country, Government of India is implementing the Centrally Sponsored Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) since 2004-05. In 2011-12, Government of