

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) to (d) The production of onion during the year 2011-12 has been estimated at 17.51 million tonnes and the area under production for the year at 1.087 million hectares. More than 80% of the production has been contributed by the States of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. According to the National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation, the quantity of the said production was sufficient to fulfill the requirement of consumption in the country.

(e) and (f) The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) which is an indicator of general price trend shows that the rate of inflation for onion which was 6.01% for the month of April 2011 started rising from May 2011 onwards and reached 48.63% for the month of August 2011. Thereafter, it started declining from September 2011, and was at (-) 24.06% for the month of March 2012.

The wholesale and retail prices as reported from major trading centres across the country during the year 2011-12 also show similar trends.

Prices of onions are mainly governed by the market forces of demand and supply, cost of transportation and storage, weather conditions, etc. Market sentiments could also affect the supply as traders anticipating any decline in production and market arrivals may curtail availability expecting a possible price rise, but the price level that prevailed during the year do not support this.

#### **Procurement of wheat for exports**

†2969. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Food Corporation of India is making arrangements for procurement of wheat in the country for export on behalf of Government;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether this procurement would be done through tender system;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the quantity of wheat of export quality which has been decided for procurement through this system presently?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. Wheat conforming to the prescribed specifications is procured by Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the State agencies under Minimum Support Price (MSP) and is utilized to meet the requirements under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes, open market sale and to maintain buffer stocks. No procurement of wheat is done specifically for the purpose of export. However, Government has decided to export 2.0 million tonnes of wheat upto 31.03.2013 and further 2.5 million tonnes of wheat upto 30.06.2013 from the Central Pool stocks.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

(e) Does not arise.

#### **Increase in prices of foodgrains**

†2970. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been huge increase in prices of foodgrains in the country during 2005-06 to 2012-13;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that the prices of wheat, rice, pulses, milk, vegetables and protein rich materials have increased from minimum 91.6 per cent to maximum 146 per cent during the above said period and if not, the increase in prices of each material stated above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) and (b) The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) which is an indicator of price trend showed that the annual rate of inflation for foodgrains (Cereals + pulses) during 2005-06 to 2012-13 had been fluctuating and was in the range of 3.61% to 14.70%.

Government has initiated several measures to control the prices and improve the availability of essential commodities such as allowing import of various items of mass consumption at zero or concessional import duties together with restriction on their exports, prescribing stock holding limits under Essential Commodities Act, allocation of foodgrains at affordable prices under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), etc.

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