

decreasing due to ongoing climate changes and excessive use of chemical fertilizers;

(b) whether Government is conducting any scientific study after having a survey, to ascertain the current status of soil fertility; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) There is no scientific evidence of declining soil fertility with judicious use of chemical fertilizers. However, indiscriminate and imbalance use of fertilizers coupled with low addition of organic matter over years may result into multinutrient deficiencies and deterioration of soil health as evident from results of AICRP on 'Long Term Fertilizer Experiments' being conducted by Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

Under climate change scenario in many parts of the country, intensive rainfall events may cause runoff and soil erosion. As a result, along with soil, organic carbon and other nutrients are washed away from the field. This may be one of the possible causes of soil fertility decline with climate change.

(b) and (c) Indian Institute of Soil Science (IISS), Bhopal is preparing geo-referenced soil fertility maps of various districts of the country (167 districts completed) through different AICRP Coordinating Centres located at various State Agricultural Universities. These geo-referenced maps can be useful in monitoring soil fertility, fertilizer recommendations for balanced nutrient application in various parts of the country.

Compensation to farmers losing crops due to rains

1568. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether farmers in Maharashtra, particularly of Vidarbha region are facing tremendous loss caused to their harvest due to heavy rains;

(b) if so, in how many hectares the harvest was lost;

(c) whether Government would come forward to compensate farmers who suffered damage to their crops; and

(d) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR): (a) and (b) As per information made available by Government of Maharashtra, crops in an area of about 6.53 lakh ha have been damaged in Vidarbha region due to consistent heavy rains during June and July, 2013.

(c) and (d) State Government can initiate appropriate relief measures in the wake of loss/damage to crops due to natural calamities including flood from funds readily available under State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

Additional financial assistance, over and above SDRF, is provided from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), upon receipt of detailed memorandum from the State Government following which Inter Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) is deputed for assessing the situation and recommending central assistance as per established procedure and extant norms.

Quinoa cultivation in Andhra Pradesh

1569. SHRI C.M. RAMESH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Andhra Pradesh Academy of Rural Development has successfully experimented Quinoa which can replace cereal with its rich nutrient value;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Quinoa can survive severe heat and do not need too much water;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and