

**Security restrictions on marine sector**

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

(a) whether it is a fact that many security restriction, particularly for foreign crew, are hurting the marine sector and have resulted in the loss of nearly Rs. 2800 crore in the past two years;

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

(c) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken to rectify the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHARAN DAS MAHANT) : (a) Deep Sea fishing operators have shown their inability in fishing operations in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) since past two years due to conditions of Ministry of Home Affairs for providing security clearance of foreign crew, such as (i) requirement of minimum salary of US \$ 25000 per annum as a condition for grant of security clearance to foreign crew (ii) foreign crew to be restricted to 10-15% of the total crew (iii) relaxation of the minimum salary condition of US \$ 25000 per annum to foreign crew up to 31-12-2013, and (iv) replacement of the foreign crew by Indian crew by 31-12-2013.

(b) and (c) Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries has requested Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for removal of the restrictions on engagement of foreign crew on deep-sea fishing vessels (DSFVs) due to shortage of trained Indian crew in deep sea fishing. Department has also requested MHA for maintenance of status quo on existing deep-sea fishing guidelines issued by the department, which allow up to 75 per cent of foreign crew onboard deep-sea fishing vessels.

Also, an Expert Committee has been constituted on 1.8.2013 to have a comprehensive review of the Marine fishing policy and to suggest measures for development of deep sea fishing in India.

**Continuous use of pesticides**

944. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether continuous use of pesticides over the years had made an adverse impact on the fertility of soil;

(b) if so, whether Government has taken any constructive steps to preserve the fertility of soil; and

(c) if so, the details thereof; and if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR) : (a) to (c) Sir, no report has been received in Ministry of Agriculture to suggest that continuous use of pesticides over the years had made an adverse impact on the fertility of soil.

It may be stated that pesticides are registered after evaluating the data on efficacy and safety to human beings, animals and agro-eco system, under which their metabolism in soil water and plants is also evaluated. As such, no adverse effect is likely to occur to the agro-eco system by use of such pesticides in the manner prescribed.

Further, the Government is popularizing the strategy of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) through a Central Sector Scheme "Strengthening and Modernization of Pest Management Approach in India". Under the ambit of IPM programme, the Government has established 31 Central IPM Centres in 28 States and one UT. The mandate of these Centres is promotion of pest/disease monitoring, conservation, production and release of bio-control agents/bio-pesticides, and Human Resource Development in IPM by imparting training to Agriculture/Horticulture Extension Officers and farmers at grass roots level through Farmers' Field Schools (FFSs) in agricultural fields. The basic aim of FFS is to train farmers to deploy alternate strategies for pest management by placing greater reliance on cultural, mechanical and biological methods, and advocating judicious use of **chemical pesticide as a measure of last resort**. FFSs are conducted by trained personnel over a period of 14 weeks. Up to the financial year 2012-13, the Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage under the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has organized 14,617 Nos. of Farmers Field Schools (FFSs) wherein 58,422 Agriculture/Horticulture Extension Officers and 4,39,508 farmers in different crops have been trained.

Besides, the Registration Committee constituted under the Insecticides Act, 1968 approves registration under a relatively relaxed set of guidelines.