

In order to make agriculture a profitable venture, the Government of India has launched several schemes to increase investments in agriculture sector, for accelerating agricultural growth and to raise farm incomes, such as, the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Development and Strengthening of Infrastructure facilities for Production and Distribution of Quality Seed, National Horticulture Mission (NHM), Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM), Gramin Bhandaran Yojana etc.

**Decline in fertility of land due to cultivation of Bt. cotton**

†3244. DR. VIJAYLAXMI SADHO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bt. cotton decreases the fertility of soil and increases the production cost; and

(b) if so, the facts in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Bt. cotton cultivation does not decrease the fertility of soil as integrated nutrient management strategies are advocated for long term sustainability of cotton production system. Bt. cotton is effective in controlling dreaded bollworm pest and reduces the need for use of chemical insecticides as compared to conventional cotton varieties and hybrids. Bt. cotton hybrids retain more number of bolls leading to better yield realisation.

**Special MSPs in view of severe drought condition**

3245. SHRI ARVIND KUMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether steps taken so far by the Central Government to cope with the drought situation in the country are insufficient;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government would announce Special MSPs for current season in view of severe drought condition in the country and pitiable financial condition of farmers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.