

**Action plan for water guzzling agricultural products**

\*71. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has identified water guzzling agricultural products which are grown in Maharashtra and other parts of the country, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether Government has prepared any policy or action plan with regard to such agricultural products which are responsible for creating drought conditions; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has identified Rice and Sugarcane as water guzzling field crops as they require high amount of water for producing unit quantity of output/economic yield. The average area (average of 2008-09 to 2012-13) under cultivation of rice and sugarcane in India is 43.41 and 4.70 million hectare, respectively.

(b) and (c) To reduce utilization of water in paddy cultivation, government is promoting water conservation techniques like Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) through seed drills and drum seeders, System of Rice Intensification (SRI), alternate wetting & drying method, laser land leveling, adoption of varieties which require less water, etc. through various crop development programmes like National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India (BGREI), etc. Government is also implementing Crop Diversification Programme in Original Green Revolution States of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh since 2013-14 in order to diversify cropping pattern from water guzzling paddy to pulses, oilseeds, maize and agro-forestry with the objective of tackling the problem of depleting water table in these States. In order to promote judicious use of water in sugarcane cultivation, farmers are given advisories and assistance for adoption of technologies and agronomic practices for efficient water use like drip irrigation system, alternate row, irrigation, mulching, etc. to save irrigation water. Government is promoting cultivation of pulses and coarse cereals under NFSM and oilseeds under National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP) in rainfed areas as these crops need less water.

Government has also launched a National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) which focuses on enhancing water use efficiency by promoting efficient on-farm water management technologies and equipment like drip and sprinkler, creation of farm ponds, efficient delivery and distribution systems, etc. with emphasis to manage and equitably distribute common resources by involving water users associations, etc.