

Estimated agricultural production

1082. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the expected rainfall this year;
- (b) whether there is going to be scarce agricultural production;
- (c) if so, the estimated agricultural production; and
- (d) the steps being taken to achieve the normal agricultural production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) As per forecast of India Meteorological Department (IMD), the overall rainfall in the country during the current monsoon season is likely to be lower by 7% as compared to Long Period Average (LPA). At all India level, the cumulative rainfall during 1st June to 13th July, 2014 has been deficient by 43% as compared to LPA.

(b) and (c) Production of Kharif crops is impacted by the overall rainfall situation in the country during monsoon season. First Advance Estimates of Production of agricultural crops are normally released in September each year and the same for 2014-15 have not been prepared so far. However, as per preliminary trends on sowing and present rainfall scenario in the country, production of Kharif crops during 2014-15 is likely to be far below the record levels of production achieved during the last year.

(d) To tackle the deficit rainfall situation in many parts of the country, the States have prepared district-wise Contingency Plans in consultation with Central Research Institute of Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), State Agricultural Universities and Institutes of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Besides, they have also been asked to ensure availability of seeds of shorter duration, drought tolerant varieties and alternate crops, availability of fertilizers, power supply and other critical inputs in time.

Farmers are also being regularly advised through Farmers SMS Portal to adopt techniques such as *in-situ* moisture conservation and on farm water harvesting through farm ponds, etc., ridge-furrow, broad bed furrow, promoting agronomic practices like mulching, timely weed management, zero tillage practices including direct seeded rice through seed drills/drum seeder, use of short duration and, drought resistant varieties of paddy like Sahbhagi Dhan, intercropping and mixed cropping with pulses/oilseeds/coarse cereals, spray of drought mitigating chemicals, etc.