

electronic media including radio, television and mobile phones; farmers'- scientists interfaces like Kisan Gosthi, field days, field visits, diagnostic visits etc.

In addition, visits of farmers are also arranged to research farms of the AUs at their main campus and also to their regional/zonal research stations by different extension agencies operating in the States.

Moreover, the technology inputs like seeds and planting materials of improved varieties; bio-fertilizers; vermicompost and bio-agents; extension literature in printed and electronic form; and livestock species and fingerlings produced by AUs are also made available to farmers.

All of these front-line extension programmes bring farmers into direct contact with AUs.

Study to understand causes of farmers' suicides

1792. SHRI AVINASH PANDE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has undertaken any study to understand and analyze the socio-economic causes of farmers' suicide in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether there exists any correlation between suicides due to the indebtedness of farmers and the nature of crops *i.e.* cash crops, foodgrains, GM crops etc. cultivated by them; and

(c) if so, whether Government is planning any targeted interventions in agriculture sector to alleviate the socio-economic distress of cultivators of such crops?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA) : (a) and (b) Government has not conducted any such study as agriculture is a State subject under the Constitution and the States are primarily responsible for the development of agriculture sector, including welfare of farmers.

Reasons of suicide by farmers, as recorded by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) are family problems, illness, drug abuse/addiction, unemployment, property dispute, bankruptcy or sudden change in economic status, poverty, professional/career

problem, love affair, barrenness/impotency, cancellation/non-settlement of marriage, dowry dispute, fall in social reputation, causes not known, etc.

Causes of farmers suicide due to agrarian reasons, *inter-alia*, include indebtedness, crop failure, drought, socio-economic and personal.

(c) Agriculture, being a state subject, State Governments take appropriate measures for development of the same. Government of India supplements the efforts of States through policy and budgetary support. Government of India has taken several steps to revitalize the agriculture sector and improve condition of farming community on sustainable basis by increasing investment, improving farm practices, rural infrastructure, extension, marketing, etc. Various programmes/schemes for the development of agriculture sector are being implemented in a decentralized manner with flexibility to State Governments to formulate and implement appropriate projects to suit their specific requirements. The focus of Government is primarily on expansion of farm income, creation of non-farm income opportunities, improvement in productivity of rainfed agriculture, increasing coverage of farming areas under protective irrigation and forging appropriate backward and forward linkages. Other measures taken by the Government for the benefit of farmers include enhancement in minimum support prices of agricultural commodities, increase in credit flow to agriculture sector, debt waiver/relief, interest subvention on crop loans, revival package for strengthening Short Term Rural Cooperative Credit Structure, etc.

Cultivable land in the country

† 1793. DR. CHANDRAPAL SINGH YADAV : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the area of cultivable land in the country; and
- (b) whether there has been any increase in area of cultivable land during last ten years and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA) : (a) and (b) As per the latest available Land Use Statistics data, area of cultivable land in the country during last ten years is as given in the table below:-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.