

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) Cotton seed was brought under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 (ECA, 1955) from 22.12.2009 to protect the interest of cotton producing farmers by regulating the production, supply, distribution and quality of cotton seeds. This acts as a deterrent against sale of spurious cotton seeds. The inclusion under ECA, 1955 does not provide for any price regulation of cotton seeds.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) At present, there is no such proposal with the Government.

(d) The reintroduction of cotton seeds under the ECA, 1955 does not regulate the prices of cotton seeds and is not against the policies of reforms, liberalization, market-led economy and WTO obligations.

(e) At present, there is no such proposal with the Government.

Loss of crops due to untimely rains and hailstorms

118. SHRI RAM KUMAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has ascertained the quantum of crops damaged and losses suffered by farmers due to recent untimely rains and hailstorms in various States, if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(b) whether several farmers have either committed suicide or have died of heart attack due to the shock, if so, the steps taken by Government to provide help to the bereaved families;

(c) the quantum of relief given to the farmers who have lost their crops; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to waive off farm loans given to the small and marginal farmers, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA): (a) In the month of February-March 2015 many States like Gujarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal, Telangana and Kerala were hit by hailstorm and unseasonal rainfall. As per inputs received from States, State-wise crop area affected due to hailstorm and unseasonal rains in country on the basis of preliminary assessment is given in the Statement [Refer to the Statement Appended to the Answer to USQ No. 112 (Part a and b)].

(b) As per reports received from State Governments namely Punjab, Karnataka, Goa, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, there have been no incidents of farmers suicide due to agrarian distress caused by recent untimely rains and hailstorms.

(c) The Government of India, Ministry of Home affairs has issued order on revised items and norms of assistance under State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) on 8th April, 2015.

The extant norms *inter-alia* provide for assistance to the farmers in the form of agriculture input subsidy (where crop loss is 33% and above) for damage caused to all types agriculture and horticulture cropped areas due to the notified natural calamities. These are ₹ 6,800/- per hectare for rainfed crops, ₹ 13,500/- per hectare for irrigated crops, subject to minimum assistance not less ₹ 1000/- and restricted to sown areas and ₹ 18,000/- per hectare for all type of perennial crops, subject to minimum assistance not less than ₹ 2,000/- and restricted to sown areas, where crop loss is more than 33% and above. In addition, the calamity affected farmers are entitled for claims under various crop insurance schemes.

(d) In order to provide relief to the farmers, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued guidelines for relief measure by banks in area affected by natural calamities. The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has already requested State Governments to organize meeting of State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC) and District Level Consultative Committee (DLCC). RBI guidelines provide for conversion of short term loan in to term loan.

Damage to crops due to rains and hailstorms

119. SHRI BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDER: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether crops in various States of the country have been damaged due to unprecedented rains and hailstorms;

(b) whether any assessment has been made about the damage to crops and losses to farmers;

(c) the efforts being made to give relief to farmers whose crops have been damaged; and

(d) the details of compensation provided so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In the month of February-March 2015 many States like Gujarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh,