

(c) if so, whether Government has asked the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) to take immediate steps in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) ICAR is working with ISRO in various programmes to harness the potential of space technology in agricultural research involving different ICAR institutes including IARI. The IARI scientists have also participated in the workshops held on NISAR satellite data applications organized by SAC, ISRO, Ahmedabad. At the recently held meeting on 11th September, 2015 on the subject 'Promoting Space Technology in Governance and Development', the Government asked all participating departments including ICAR to utilize space technology in the furtherance of their goals.

Suicide by farmers in Maharashtra

1442. SHRI D. P. TRIPATHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the incidents of farmers' suicides in Maharashtra are startling;

(b) the role of the Central Government to tackle this issue; and

(c) whether any short-term and long term measures have been identified to prevent farmers' suicides in Maharashtra, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIA): (a) As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs report entitled 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' for the year 2014 the total number of suicides by farmers in Maharashtra under the profession 'Self-employed Persons [Agriculture (Farmers)]' due to various causes is 2568.

NCRB Report for the year 2015 is not yet published.

However, the State Government of Maharashtra has reported 725 number of suicides by farmers from January, 2015 to October, 2015 due to agrarian reasons.

(b) and (c) The Government believes that farmers welfare will improve if there is increase in net income from the farms. With this end in view, the approach is to reduce

cost of cultivation, enable higher yield per unit and realize remunerative prices. Some of the important new initiatives in this context are :

- (i) Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme by which the farmers can know the exact nutrient level available in their soils which will ensure judicious use of fertilizer application and save money. The balanced use of fertilizer will also enhance productivity and ensure higher returns to the farmers.
- (ii) Neem Coated Urea is being promoted to regulate urea use, enhance its availability to the crop and cut on cost. The entire quantity of domestically manufactured urea is now neem coated.
- (iii) Parampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) is being implemented with a view to promoting organic farming in the country. This will improve soil health and organic matter content and increase net income of the farmer so as to realise premium prices.
- (iv) The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) is another innovative scheme to expand cultivated area with assured irrigation, reduce wastage of water and improve water use efficiency.
- (v) The Government is also implementing several Centrally Sponsored Schemes - National Food Security Mission (NFSM); Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH); National Mission on Oilseeds and Oilpalm (NMOOP); National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA); National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology (NMAET); National Crop Insurance Programme (NCIP); Unified National Agriculture Markets; and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).
- (vi) The Government undertakes procurement of wheat and paddy under its 'Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations'. In addition, Government implements Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of agricultural and horticultural commodities not covered under the Minimum Price Support Scheme on the request of State/UT Government. The MIS is implemented in order to protect the growers of these commodities from making distress sale in the event of bumper crop when the prices tend to fall below the economic level/cost of production. Losses, if any, incurred by the procuring agencies are shared by the Central Government and the concerned State Government on 50:50 basis (75:25 in case of North-Eastern States). Profit, if any, earned by the procuring agencies is retained by them.

For Kharif 2015, the Government enhanced MSP for various agricultural commodities and also provided for a bonus of ₹ 200 per quintal over and above the MSP in case of pulses.

Likewise, the Government has announced MSP for Rabi 2015 and has declared a bonus of ₹ 75 per quintal over and above the MSP for pulses.

In addition to MSP and MIS as market intervention activities, the Government is aiming to improve marketing efficiency for agricultural commodities in the country. With this objective, the Government is implementing 'National Agricultural Market' scheme, which will lead to creation of an integrated and nation wide agricultural market. This will usher in efficient and competitive price discovery mechanism, thereby transferring remunerative prices to the farmers.

Dearth of agricultural scientists

†1443. SHRI MEGHRAJ JAIN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the agriculture field/profession in the country is facing a dearth of agricultural scientists;

(b) whether more than 1000 posts of agricultural scientists against sanctioned posts are lying vacant in the country as well as many posts are lying vacant in the institutions of ICAR also;

(c) whether appointments are not being made even after constitution of ASRB;

(d) if so, the steps being taken by Government to deal with this problem and by when these vacancies are likely to be filled; and

(e) the details of the steps taken by Government on the aforesaid problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No Sir, in this connection it is mentioned that the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) is a vast network with ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) institutes, SAUs (State Agricultural Universities)/CAUs/KVKs spread across the country which meets the requirement of human resources engagement in the fields of research/extension/education in agriculture. The responsibility for filling up the vacant positions pertaining to different SAUs vests with them and they work under the State Government

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.