

for the States/UTs free of cost. DAC&FW will also give grant as one time fixed cost subject to the ceiling of ₹ 30.00 lakhs per Mandi (other than to the private mandis) for related equipment/infrastructure in 585 regulated mandis, for installation of the e-market platform. State Governments will suggest names of Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs) where this project would be initiated.

Integration of States APMCs with NAM requires certain pre-requisites in the State APMC Acts, namely- (i) a single license to be valid across the State, (ii) single point levy of market fee and (iii) provision for electronic auction as a mode for price discovery. Only those States/UTs that have completed these three pre-requisites will be eligible for assistance under the scheme.

In so far as present status of NAM is concerned, SFAC has since finalized selection of its Strategic Partner who will develop, operate and maintain the NAM platform. Simultaneously, the Departmental Project Appraisal Committee for NAM has approved the proposals of Gujarat, Telangana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh for integration of some of their mandis with NAM.

**Reduction in funding meant for farm based programme
telecast in DD Kisan Channel**

1447. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry is not happy with the content telecast of DD's Kisan Channel; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Ministry has cut 44 per cent of funding meant for farm-based programmes, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIA):
(a) No, Sir.

(b) (i) This Ministry has requested Information and Broadcasting Ministry to manage same number of farm based programmes both for Krishi Darshan programmes of Doordarshan and Kisan Vani Programmes of All India Radio with a Budget of ₹ 70.00 crores.

(ii) Separately, the Ministry has mandated I&B Ministry in the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity to conceive and run spots largely on Doordarshan, All

India Radio, Outdoor Campaign, as also on Private Television/Radio Channels and news papers that are beneficial for farmers

National policy on organic farming

1448. SHRI T. RATHINAVEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a switch over to organic agriculture could end the problems of agrarian distress and groundwater consumption; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government is considering to come out with a national policy on organic farming to systematically tackle the adverse consequences of chemical based farming, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIA):

(a) Organic farming respects the environment own system for controlling pests and diseases in raising crops and livestock without any use of external inputs such as chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides. Use of organic inputs such as farm yard manure, Vermi-compost and bio-fertilizers increases the water holding capacity of soils which ultimately reduces the requirement of water in crops. However, groundwater consumption is linked to many other factors such as improper method and time of application of water, phenomenon of drought/excess rainfall, unseasonal rains etc. and therefore merely switching over to organic agriculture will not be able to end the problem of excess groundwater consumption.

India has to raise its food production from about 252.7 million tonnes in 2014-15 to about 300 million tonnes in 2025 to meet its food security requirements. Keeping this in view, the agricultural scientists have been advocating the integrated use of inorganic, organic and bio-fertilizers to supply the required amounts of nutrients to crops. Organic Farming benefits particularly resource poor, small and marginal farmers in rain fed and hilly areas where the use of costly chemical fertilizers is lower than national average.

(b) The Policy of Ministry of Agriculture on organic farming is to promote technically sound, economically viable, environmentally non-degrading, and socially acceptable use of natural resources in favour of organic agriculture. The Policy seeks to actualize the area and crop potential for organic farming, sustaining soil fertility, conserving bio-resources, strengthening rural economy, promoting value addition, for accelerating the growth of agro-business and securing a fair standard of living for the farmers and agricultural workers and their families.