

[9 July, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) The details of the places are; Dhakrani, Dehradun; Gaina, Pithoragarh, Kashipur, Udham Singh Nagar, Majhera and Nainital.

Foodgrain output

85. SHRI R.P GOENKA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the foodgrains output during 2003-2004 is expected to be around 211 million tonnes, falling far short of the estimated target of 220 million tonnes;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken to achieve higher targets and/or check any decline in food output?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) As per the Third Advance Estimates of production of foodgrains released on 3rd June 2004, the total production of foodgrains is estimated at 210.78 million tonnes which is 9.22 million tonnes less than the targeted production of 220.00 million tonnes.

(b) During 2003-04, although the total rainfall at all-India level was 102 per cent of the long period average, a number of districts/regions in the country, specially those in State with relatively higher yield like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu were affected by drought. Further, abnormal rise in temperature in March, 2004 adversely affected wheat yield.

(c) With a view to improving production and productivity of foodgrains, the following areas have been identified for focused and priority attention:

- Doubling Rural Credit in three years, easing the burden of debt and high interest rates;
- Dry Land Farming and Water Management;
- Creation of Additional Irrigation facilities;
- Market support to farmer's produce for ensuring fair and remunerative prices;

- Insurance of crops against production loss due to natural calamities;
- Assistance to the farmers under various agricultural production programmes.

Making agriculture remunerative

† 86. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that agriculture has turned into a non-profitable industry and agriculturists are committing suicides as they are not able to repay the loans;

(b) if not, the assessment of Government in this regard; and

(c) the rapid and long term measures decided by Government for making agriculture a profitable industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Index of Terms of Trade (ITT), reflecting the inter sectoral terms of trade between agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, which had declined from 105.6 in 1997-98 to 102.8 in 2000-01 recovered to 104.5 during 2001-02. For the year 2002-03, ITT is estimated at 106.8, reflecting further improvement in the terms of trade in favour of agriculture.

Farmers in certain parts of the country have committed suicide for reasons which can broadly be attributed to crop failure, indebtedness because of high rate of interest on loans, drought social and economic insecurity, family disputes, marital disharmony etc.

(c) To mitigate the problems of the farmers the Government have identified the following areas for focused and priority attention:

- Doubling Rural Credit in three years, easing the burden of debt and high interest rates;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.