

Training to farmers for conservation of water

504. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the action taken to provide training to farmers to take up water conserving techniques such as drip irrigation to preserve water being used indiscriminately?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme - Supplementation/Complementation of States' efforts through Work Plans (Macro Management)—having 'Development of Use of Plastics in Agriculture'—as one of its component. Under the above said component, seventeen precision Farming Development Centres are functioning in different agro-climatic regions of the country where farmers are being trained in adopting improved irrigation techniques like drip irrigation.

Besides, the Ministry of Agriculture is also promoting water conservation techniques, including drip irrigation, through various extension activities like booklets, radio talks, Gosthies.

Closing down of Inland Fisheries Research Centre at Alapuzha, Kerala

505. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is associated with the inland fisheries studies of Kerala through the Inland Fisheries Research Centre located at Alapuzha in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details of research projects, initiated and ongoing, in the centre for the last three years, year-wise, category-wise;

(c) whether authorities plan to close the office of the centre at Alapuzha;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether steps will be taken to continue the above centre in the context of the fragile eco-system of region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The research projects initiated and on-going at Alapuzha Centre for the last three years are: Fishery and biology of selected prawn species in Kayamkulam backwaters (2000-01 and 2001-02); Ecology and biodiversity of Kayamkulam lake (2002—05). The studies pertain to ecology and fisheries of backwaters of Kerala, focusing on Kayamkulam lake.

(c) to (e) In view of the need to address emerging areas such as eco-modeling, fisheries management with GIS and related studies, it has become necessary to have upgraded facilities and critical scientific mass at a few selected Centres for achieving competitive edge at global level, that would be difficult to be undertaken at Alapuzha Centre, housed in a rented building with a few technical staff only. These studies could be undertaken only at a few Centres, that however, would cover the aquatic resources of the entire country. The CIFRI Centre at Bangalore, is mandated to address the inland fisheries of the four southern States. Hence, it was felt to shift the programmes of Alapuzha Centre to Bangalore Research Centre, during Tenth Plan EFC Meeting of CIFRI, Barrackpore, held in New Delhi on 20.6.2003. However, further in-depth analysis is on and Alapuzha Centre is being continued on the existing basis till a final decision is taken.

Extinction of aromatic varieties of paddy

†506. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in absence of Government protection, a number of varieties of traditional Indian aromatic paddy became extinct sharply during the last few decades;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government are taking to save the varieties of aromatic traditional paddy from becoming extinct?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Not Applicable.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.