

(b) whether Government proposes to establish a regional office of Coconut Development Board in Maharashtra, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT): (a) No, Sir. However, the State Centre Office of Coconut Development Board (CDB) at Thane, is looking after various developmental activities of CDB in Maharashtra.

Besides, a Demonstration cum Seed Production Farm (DSP Farm) has also been established at Dapoli Village, Satpati, District Palghar in Maharashtra.

Regional Office of CDB for Western region is located at Bangalore.

(b) No such proposal is under the consideration of the Government.

#### **Steps to make barren land fertile**

†554. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken note of the report of Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), according to which 105.49 million hectare land of the country has turned barren and 25 per cent area has turned into desert;

(b) whether this turning of barren land is impacting Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab the most;

(c) if so, the reasons for the land turning into barren;

(d) whether Government is taking steps to make the barren land fertile and check the further turning of land into barren, if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT): (a) Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) have not conducted study to assess the barren and desert land in the country. However, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) conducts survey from time to time for assessing the extent of soil erosion and land degradation. As per available estimates (ICAR-2010), out of a total geographical area of 328.73 million ha. about 120.40 million ha. (37%) is subjected to various kinds of land degradation which includes 94.87 million ha. of area affected by water and wind erosion in the country.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) As per available estimates, about 1.73 million ha. of areas in the States of Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh are affected by alkalinity and salinity. Main reason of such problem is excess use of irrigation water, imbalance use of chemical fertilizers and non adoption of recommended crop rotation.

(d) and (e) According to the definition of land uses, barren land includes all lands covered by mountains, deserts, etc. which cannot be brought under cultivation except at an exorbitant cost. As such, there is no comprehensive programme for development of barren land into fertile land. However, Government of India is implementing various watershed development programmes for development of degraded land in the country and parts of such developed land are put to cultivation for various crops including food crops.

### **ILL effects of excess use of fertilizers and pesticides**

555. SHRI VIVEK GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides is adding excessive carcinogens in both land and food produce which is causing irreparable damage to the health of the land and the people;

(b) the steps being taken by Government to prevent such practices;

(c) the amount of fertilizer subsidy disbursed during last five years, State-wise and district-wise; and

(d) whether Government has commissioned a survey to study the ill effects of excessive use of fertilizers, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT): (a) and (b) There is no scientific evidence that balanced and judicious use of fertilizers and registered pesticides is adding carcinogens in land and food produce.

The Government is promoting adoption of soil test based site specific Integrated Nutrient Management envisaging conjunctive use of both inorganic and organic source of plant nutrients like, bio-fertilizers and locally available organic manures like Farm Yard Manure (FYM), Compost, Vermi-Compost and Green Manure to ensure judicious use of fertilizers.

‘Soil Health Card’ (SHC) Scheme assists all State Governments to evaluate fertility in all 14 crore farm holdings and issue soil health cards to farmers regularly