

the sugar season 2015-16, total availability sugar in the country is expected to be sufficient to meet domestic requirement for the next sugar season 2016-17.

(c) Details of area coverage under sugarcane in the country during the last three years *i.e.* 2013-14 to 2015-16 are as under:

Crop	Area (in lakh ha.)		
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16*
Sugarcane	49.93	50.67	49.61

*3rd Advance Estimates.

It is observed that depending upon the rainfall/weather conditions, availability of water in reservoirs, irrigation facilities, resource availability, shift of area to other competing crops etc., there are minor fluctuations in the total area under sugarcane in the country. However, at all India level the overall area under the crop during the last three years *i.e.* 2013-14 to 2015-16 has been hovering at around 50 lakh ha.

Protection of fertility and health of soil

1377. SHRI K. K. RAGESH:

SHRI D. KUPENDRA REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the regular use of fertilizers and pesticides affects fertility and health of soil, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the steps taken by Government for protection of fertility and health of soil?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) studies show that there is no harmful effect of fertilizers and pesticides with recommended doses and judicious use. However, studies point out that imbalance in the use of chemical fertilizers coupled with low addition of organic matter over years may cause multi-nutrient deficiencies in soil. The limiting nutrients do not allow the full expression of other nutrients, thereby, lowering the fertilizer responses and crop productivity.

(b) The Government is promoting adoption of soil test based site specific Integrated Nutrient Management envisaging conjunctive use of both inorganic and organic source

(like, bio-fertilizers and locally available organic manures like Farm Yard Manure, compost, Vermi-Compost and Green manure) of plant nutrients to ensure judicious use of fertilizers preventing deterioration of soil health.

The Government is implementing following schemes to increase soil fertility and productivity:

(i) Soil Health Management (SHM)

(ii) Soil Health Card (SHC)

Under the Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme, soil health cards will be provided to all farm holdings in the country at the interval of two years so as to enable farmers to apply appropriate recommended dosages of nutrients for crop production and improving the soil health and its fertility.

Under Soil Health Management (SHM), assistance is provided to States for setting up/strengthening soil testing labs, trainings and demonstrations on balanced use of fertilizers.

In addition, the Government is implementing 'Strengthening and Modernization of Pest Management Approach in India' through 35 Central Integrated Pest Management Centres (CIPMCs) of Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and Storage established across the country with an aim to promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. CIPMCs *inter alia*, produce biological agents for release in the fields, conserve natural bio-control agents, promote bio-pesticides as an alternative to chemical pesticides as an alternative to chemical pesticides and advocate judicious and safe use of chemical pesticides as a last resort. A 'Grow Safe Food' campaign has been initiated to carry the message of safe and judicious use of pesticide.

Implementation of NFSM in Rajasthan

†1378. SHRI RAM NARAIN DUDI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of districts in Rajasthan at present which have been selected to be covered under National Food Security Mission (NFSM) for coarse foodgrains; and

(b) whether Central Government plans to cover those districts of Rajasthan under this scheme having more than 66 per cent of sowing area and production of coarse foodgrains (maize), if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA): (a) From 2014-15, Coarse cereals component has

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.