

(d) if so, the details of the average production as well as consumption during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN):
 (a) and (b) Consequent upon improvement of the availability of various agricultural products, the Government has already removed restrictions such as licensing, stocking and movement on a number of foodstuffs viz. wheat, paddy/rice, coarse grains, sugar, edible oilseeds and edible oils, pulses, gur, wheat products (namely maida, rava, suji, atta, resultant atta and bran) and hydrogenated vegetable oil or vanaspati during the years 2002 and 2003 to do away with the controls as agricultural products. Onion is a perishable commodity and storage problems coupled with controls/interventions have often led to distress sale by farmers in several States at very low prices, causing them economic hardship. Therefore it has been felt that 'Onion' can be removed from the list of essential commodities in the present context of liberalization and free trade.

(c) and (d) 'Onion' is presently existing in the list of essential commodities. Before taking a final decision to put onion out of the purview of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, various trading aspects viz. availability, production etc. of onion would also be taken into account. The average production as well as consumption of onion during the last three years had been as follows:

Year	<i>(in million tonnes)</i>	
	Production	Consumption including requirement for seeds
2001-02	4.80	4.29
2002-03	5.45	4.90
2003-04	5.72	4.89

Shortage of storage

1078. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the foodgrains have to be kept lying in open even during monsoon due to shortage of storage space in many parts of the country;

[23 July, 2004]

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(b) if so, the details of loss suffered on this account last year and the steps taken till date to avoid/minimize such loss during the current years;

(c) whether the Food Corporation of India and Central Warehousing Corporation constructed any more godowns for storage of foodgrains particularly in Punjab and Maharashtra; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) During peak procurement period, foodgrains may have to be kept in scientifically built Cover and Plinth (CAP) storage, wherever covered space is not readily available.

(b) During the year 2003-04, out of 25.17 lakh MT of stocks stored in Cover and Plinth (CAP), approximately 0.13 lakh MT (i.e. 0.5%) got damaged.

The stocks stored under Cover and Plinth (CAP) are frequently inspected and liquidated on priority, to minimize losses.

(c) and (d) From the year 2002-03 onwards, FCI has constructed covered storage capacity of 2.41 lakh MTs, including 0.28 lakh MT in Punjab and 0.08 lakh MT in Maharashtra. Similarly, Central Warehousing Corporation created 6.73 lakh MTs of storage space from 2002-03 onwards, including 0.17 lakh MT in Punjab. However, no storage godowns were constructed in Maharashtra during this period.

Rice at BPL rate to Andhra Pradesh

1079. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the decision taken and proposed to be taken in response to Andhra Pradesh Government's recent request to allot a quantity of 6 lakh tonnes of rice at BPL rate for supply to BPL families in the drought affected areas @ 20 kgs. per month per family over and above the PDS entitlement who do not have purchasing capacity, and looking for employment opportunities; and

(b) if not, the reasons for not having taken a decision, so far?