

- (b) the key characteristics of organic farming; and
- (c) the total number of farmers practicing organic farming, State and Union Territory-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) to (c) The Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched under National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) to promote organic farming. The scheme is implemented through State Government who form clusters of 20 hectare each and provide an assistance of ₹50,000 per hectare per farmer in cluster during the 3 years with the objectives that organic agriculture should be production of agricultural products free from chemicals and pesticides residues by adopting ecofriendly low cost technologies. Further, its objective is also to improve the soil fertility, water holding capacity and availability of micro nutrient in the soil, restore ecological security and attain sustainability of agriculture production. Total 3.59 lakh farmers in 29 States and 1 Union Territory are receiving assistance under the Scheme.

Restriction on cultivation of paddy and sugarcane in Karnataka

3371. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the State Government of Karnataka had imposed restriction on cultivation of sugarcane and paddy in view of droughts, causing huge losses to the farmers but no compensation has yet been provided, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the cultivated land during 2016-17 has reduced to 61,600 hectare from 96,200 hectare during 2015-16 affecting cultivation of even ragi, maize and pulses; and
- (c) the reasons for not extending timely support to farmers for cultivation to overcome constraints?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA): (a) The Government of Karnataka have informed that due to failure of South West Monsoon 2016 and North East Monsoon 2016, the State Government declared drought in 160 taluks during Rabi 2016-17 and cultivation of sugarcane and paddy was discouraged in Rabi/ Summer season.

- (b) As intimated by the State Government, cultivation of paddy during Rabi 2016-17 declined to 82,000 hectares (ha.) as against 1,33,000 ha. during 2015-16 and

cultivation of ragi, maize and pulses has also been below normal coverage corresponding to 2015-16.

(c) State Governments are primarily responsible for taking necessary relief in the wake of natural calamities and are empowered to initiate immediate relief measures to address the situation arising out of any natural calamity. Government of India supplements the efforts of state Governments with financial assistance. For undertaking relief measures, funds are available with the State Government in the form of State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). Additional financial assistance, over and above SDRF, is considered from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for natural calamities of severe nature and is approved on the basis of Memorandum received from State Government in accordance with established procedure, keeping in view items and norms in vogue for assistance.

Commercialisation of centres of excellence for fruits and vegetables

3372. SHRI R. VAITHILINGAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government has prepared a scheme for commercialisation of Centres of Excellence for fruits and vegetables to improve the economic condition of farmers, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether all mandis across the country have been provided with internet connectivity, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the further steps taken by Government to help the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) Government is implementing Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) for holistic development of horticulture which includes establishment of Centres of Excellence. Under the scheme Centres of Excellence can be established by States for different horticulture crops which can serve as demonstration and training centres as well as source of planting material and vegetable seedlings. States are advised to established these centres as commercially viable project to become self sustaining demonstration unit for farmers.

For establishment of Centres of Excellence under MIDH maximum amount of ₹ 10 crore is available for public sector (State Government). The Centres of Excellence can be established through bilateral cooperation also.