

to the farmers. During the last three and half years (2014-17), the KVKs conducted 97188 On Farm Trials and 3.21 lakh Front Line Demonstrations at farmers' fields; trained 40.90 lakh farmers and 4.48 lakh extension personnel; produced 8.79 lakh quintals quality seeds of different field crops, produced and distributed 12.52 crore planting materials of different horticultural crops and facilitated participation of over 3.93 crore farmers in various extension activities.

The KVKs tested 13.36 lakh soil samples, distributed 10.6 lakh soil health cards and provided agro-advisories on plant protection, weather information, market related information, animal husbandry, fisheries, etc. on the mobile phones of 3.95 crore farmers. Efforts are being made to reach out to still higher number of farmers and for this purpose, technical collaboration with IT companies like TCS is being established by the council. Similarly centres of AICR Projects located at various locations *viz.* SAUs/SVUs/NGOs etc. include the local problems for the development of new varieties, agricultural implements and new technologies. These programmes have also benefited the farmers in terms of increased crop production and improved farm income.

Economic condition of farmers

†2095. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the economic condition of farmers is not improving due to non-payment of fair price for their produces apart from lack of rain and good quality seeds, etc.;

(b) whether the farmers could not get even the cost price of their potato crops last time around and they got wasted;

(c) whether owing to this reason, the sowing of potatoes during current season has been quite less; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to check exploitation of farmers by the traders, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT): (a) Government has increased the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of mandated agricultural crops for 2017-18 season on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), after considering the views of State Governments, Central Ministries/

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Departments concerned and other relevant factors to provide remunerative prices to farmers.

According to "Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households" conducted by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the estimated average monthly income per agricultural household rose from ₹ 2115 in 2003 to ₹ 6426 in 2013. This low level of income owes *inter alia* to non-use of quality seeds, poor soil health, low irrigation facilities, inadequate marketing facilities and post-harvest support services and inadequate focus on the allied sectors of agriculture in the country. In view of this, Government set up a Committee in 2016-17 to frame policies and strategies for doubling farmers' income by 2022 through various initiatives which include Soil Health Cards (SHC), production and availability of quality seeds, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY), e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) and promotion of allied activities like dairying, poultry, beekeeping and fisheries.

(b) Horticulture produce including potato is perishable in nature and cannot be stored at ambient temperature for longer period. Therefore, arrival of the crops in very high volumes in a lumpy manner during the peak harvesting season sometimes depresses prices of agricultural/horticultural crops as they are determined by supply and demand conditions in the market.

However, Government implements Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of agricultural and horticultural crops which are not covered under the MSP on the request of State/UT Governments concerned. The MIS is implemented in order to protect the growers of these commodities from making distress sale in the event of bumper crop when the prices tend to fall below the economic level/cost of production.

(c) As per the information received from major potato producing States, the area sown under potato in 2017-18 is estimated at same level as that of last year *i.e.* 2.18 million hectares.

(d) In order to facilitate better price discovery and ensure remunerative prices to farmers the Government has also launched a scheme to develop a pan India electronic trading platform under 'e-National Agriculture Market' (e-NAM) aiming to integrate 585 regulated markets with the common e-market platform. Each State is being encouraged to undertake three major reforms: allow electronic trading, have a single license valid throughout the State and a single entry point market fee.

In addition, Government has formulated a new Model Agricultural produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2017 to provide farmers market options beyond the existing APMC regulated market yards. The provisions include private markets, direct marketing, farmer-consumer markets, special commodity market yards, declaring warehouses/silos/cold storages or such structures as market sub yards so as to reduce the number of intermediaries between producer and buyer and increase the share of the farmer in consumer's rupee.

Linking of Krishi Upaj Mandis of Bihar with e-portal

†2096. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) the progress made towards the establishment of e-mandis (market);
- (b) the number of Krishi Upaj Mandis linked with the e-portal in Bihar, so far;
- (c) whether Government is bringing any concrete proposal for the procurement of produces of farmers, so that they could be protected from exploitation by profiteers/middlemen; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT): (a) and (b) The Government is implementing National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) scheme for transparent price discovery for the farmers for their produce through competitive online bidding system. Under the scheme, an electronic trading portal with pan India trading facility has been deployed in 470 regulated wholesale markets across 14 States in the country so far. The scheme is being implementing through State Governments. The Government of Bihar has not sent any proposal for integrating their mandis with e-NAM. Hence, no mandi of Bihar have been integrated with e-NAM.

(c) and (d) Government procures oilseeds and pulses at Minimum Support Price (MSP) directly from the farmers through central/state agencies under Price Support Scheme to eliminate possibility of middlemen taking advantage of the scheme. Further, the Government procures paddy and wheat through the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and State Government agencies across the country. Under Market Intervention Scheme (MIS), procurements of agricultural and horticultural commodities, which are perishable in nature and are not covered under PSS Scheme, is done. Under MIS also,

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