

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) to (d) To protect farmers from distress sale, Central Government already supports farmers producing agriculture and horticulture commodities in consultation with State Governments/Union Territories. The objective of support is to ensure that farmers get remunerative prices for their produce and do not have to resort to distress sale.

(e) and (f) Notified oilseeds and pulses are covered under Price Support Scheme (PSS) and other perishable agricultural/horticultural produce for which Minimum Support Price (MSP) is not announced are covered under Market Intervention Scheme (MIS). Financial support is not provided to States. Instead, losses, if any, incurred by procuring agencies in undertaking PSS/MIS operations are reimbursed by the Central Government.

Implementation of National Project on soil health and fertility

609. SHRI PARTAP SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the National Soil Health Card Scheme along with the number of data collection rounds conducted per year;

(b) the details of budget allocated and actual amount spent since the inception of the scheme, year-wise;

(c) the reasons for revising the budget to half of the original amount allocated for the National Project on soil health and fertility; and

(d) whether there is a proposal to simultaneously build real-time online portals that can help farmers to gain quicker access to soil health data, if so, the details thereof, including a time-line for its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) 'Soil Health Card' (SHC) scheme has been launched in February 2015 to assist State Governments to evaluate fertility in all farm holdings and issue soil health cards to farmers regularly in a cycle of 2 years. Soil health cards provide information to farmers on nutrient status of their soil along with recommendations on appropriate dosage of nutrients to be applied for improving soil health and its fertility. Soil samples are collected after harvesting of the crops.

(b) Year-wise fund allocated and released under Soil Health Card Scheme is given below:—

(₹ in lakh)

Year	Allocation	Releases
2014-15	2389.58	2389.58
2015-16	14041.02	9644.06
2016-17	26346.40	13366.49
2017-18	24379.73	15276.87
2018-19	30224.98	19119.89

(c) Soil Health Card Scheme is a centrally sponsored programme. The pace of release depends up on the expenditure by States and UTs. However, the revised allocation for the scheme was more than initial allocation in 2014-15 and 2016-17.

(d) There is a soil health card portal operational under National Informatic Centre and the data is being uploaded by State Governments in the portal and it can be accessible to the stake holders at www.soilhealth.dac.gov.in.

Institutional and regulatory support for tobacco growers

610. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether institutional and regulatory support is given by Government for tobacco growers, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government has fixed a common mechanism to regulate buying and selling of tendu leaves from pluckers as they rely on this for their livelihood,

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether it is a fact that Government has put in place a scheme or framework to shift farmers from tobacco farming to alternate farming, if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT): (a) The Tobacco Board, set up under Tobacco Board Act, 1975 is regulating the production and curing of Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco having regard to the demand for tobacco in India and abroad, marketability of different types of FCV tobacco and other factors so as to ensure fair and remunerative prices to growers. This objective is achieved through crop planning and fixing crop size of FCV tobacco every year and by registering commercial nurserymen, tobacco growers and barn operators. As a policy, Tobacco Board under Ministry of Commerce and Industry is not granting registration to new growers and not issuing any licenses for construction of new barns creating