

Institution to regulate prices of agriculture and non-agriculture products

130. SHRI T.K.S. ELANGO VAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering to set-up an institution to regulate the prices of agricultural and non-agricultural products in rural areas to ensure the minimum guaranteed fair price for such products;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) to (c) There is no proposal to set-up an institution to regulate the prices of agricultural and non-agricultural products. The prices of agricultural produce are determined by supply and demand conditions in the market on a day-to-day basis. Price of agricultural produce tends to fall after the harvesting season due to increase in market arrival of new crop in a lumpy manner.

Government fixes the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of 22 mandated agricultural crops and Fair and Remunerative Prices (FRP) for sugarcane based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP).

As announced in the Union Budget 2018-19, the Government has increased the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for all mandated Kharif and Rabi Crops and other commercial crops for the season 2018-19 with a return of at least 50 percent over cost of production. Government offers to procure mandated agricultural produce at MSP as well as supports farmers price received in the Mandies through Price Deficiency Payment Scheme. Government is also implementing Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) on the request of the State/UT Government for procurement of agricultural and horticultural commodities, generally perishable in nature, and not covered under the price support scheme for MSP.

Buffer stock of onion

131. SHRI A. VIKAYAKUMAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any proposal to increase buffer stock of onion/ potatoes in the country;

- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the number of initiatives taken to control hoarders in the country?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) During the year 2019-20, as on 16.06.19, buffer of around 44,205 MT of onions has been built through procurement from crop of Rabi-2019 season as against a buffer of 13,508 MT built in 2018-19.

(c) Stock limits on onions is periodically reviewed keeping in view the price and availability situation. The stock limit on onion was withdrawn on 31st March, 2018 in view of the market scenario. Onion from the buffer was released during lean periods of 2017-18 and 2018-19 to moderate the prices and disincentivize hoarding. The Central Government has offered onions from the buffer to States/UTs at no profit no loss basis to improve availability and moderate prices of onion during lean season.

Piling up of foodgrains in granaries

132. SHRI C.M. RAMESH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that massive stock of foodgrain is piled up in granaries in the country, if so, details thereof, State-wise; and
- (b) whether Government proposes to offer foodgrains at subsidised rates to the poorer sections of the society to ease the granaries to prevent piling up of foodgrains in near future in those granaries, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) The stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool as on 1st June, 2019 was 741.41 lakh tons consisting of 275.81 lakh tons of rice and 465.60 lakh tons of wheat. The State-wise details of foodgrains stock held in the central pool by Food Corporation of India and State Agencies is given in Statement (*See below*). As on 1st April 2019, the actual stock of foodgrain in the central pool was 463.86 LMT *vis-a-vis* 210.40 LMT as envisaged in the Foodgrain Stocking Norms.

Government enacted National Food Security Act (NFSA) in July, 2013 which gives legal entitlement to 67% of the population (75% in rural areas and 50% in urban areas) to receive highly subsidized foodgrains. Under the Act, foodgrains is distributed @ 5 kg per person per month for priority households category and @ 35 kg per family per month for