

Cases filed by PepsiCo against farmers

15. SHRI ELAMARAM KAREEM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the corporate companies like PepsiCo are filing cases against farmers in the country, including Gujarat, for cultivating certain variety of crops;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Central Government on this issue;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government is not trying to safeguard the interest of farmers on such issues and this is the reason behind the act of such MNCs; and

(d) the manner in which Government will safeguard the interest of farmers, if there is any violation of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) and (b) Government of Gujarat informed that the PepsiCo has filed cases against the nine farmers from Sabarkantha and Aravalli districts of Gujarat for growing and selling of their registered potato variety FC 5 (FL 2027) under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 without their permission. The Commercial Court of Ahmedabad issued the summon to the farmers, restricted these farmers for uses of potato variety FC 5 (FL 2027) till 12th June, 2019 and granted interim relief to the PepsiCo. Due to Government intervention, the PepsiCo withdrew the cases unconditionally, with no orders as to costs against potato growing farmers.

(c) and (d) The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 has already ensured that the farmers interest is fully protected under the Farmers Rights under Section 39(iv), where the farmers have the right to save, use, sow, re-sow, exchange, share or sell the farm produce from the protected variety under this Act in the same manner as he was entitled before the coming into force of this Act provided that the farmer shall not be entitled to sell branded seed of a variety protected under this Act.

Ban on crop residue burning

16. SHRI SANJAY SINGH : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Green Tribunal has banned crop residue burning in the States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab in 2015;

(b) whether it is also a fact that despite the ban, the crop residue burning is spreading severely in other States every year;

(c) if so, the steps Government would undertake to avoid the hazardous residue burning by the farmers; and

(d) the amount of penalty imposed by various State Governments on farmers for burning crop residue, since the year 2015, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRINARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) The National Green Tribunal in the order passed on 10.12.2015, directed and prohibited agricultural residue burning in any part of the NCT of Delhi, State of Rajasthan, State of Punjab, State of Uttar Pradesh and State of Haryana.

(b) Paddy Stubble burning is mainly practiced in Indo-gangetic plains of the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to clear the fields for Rabi Crop sowing. However, as informed by other States, the severities of uncontrolled crop residue burning incidences are not significant.

(c) In 2018, a new Central Sector Scheme on ‘Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for *In-Situ*, Management of Crop Residue in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi’ has been launched with the total outgo from the Central funds of ₹ 1151.80 crore.

During 2018-19, funds amounting to ₹ 269.38 crores, ₹ 137.84 crores and ₹ 148.60 crores have been released to the Government of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh respectively for distribution of *in-situ* crop residue management machinery to the farmers on subsidy, establishment of Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) of *in-situ* crop residue management machinery and undertaking Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities for creating awareness among farmers.

During 2019-20, the funds amounting to ₹ 248.00 crores, ₹ 175.00 crores and ₹ 97.54 crores have also been released so far to the Government of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, respectively.

(d) Any person or body that is found offending the directions of National Green Tribunal is liable to pay Environmental Compensation and it is collected by the concerned State Governments. As per the information received from the State Governments, the Government of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have only collected the Environmental Compensation towards burning of crop residue, as stated below.

State	Environmental compensation collected by the States (₹ in lakhs)			
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Punjab	Nil	73.22	133.94	167.58
Haryana	Nil	19.38	52.78	61.72
Uttar Pradesh	Nil	Nil	Nil	28.60

Conversion of agricultural zones into industrial zones

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

(a) whether Government is considering to announce Special Agricultural Zones throughout the country to protect the agricultural zones from being converted into unchecked urban/industrial zones;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the steps taken by Government to protect the agricultural zones from being converted into urban/industrial zones?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Land use management comes in the domain of the State Government.

(c) The Government of India has taken following steps to protect the agricultural land from being converted for non-agricultural use:

- (i) The National Policy for Farmers, 2007 (4.2.2 of Chapter-4) relating to asset reforms to empower farmers states that the Prime farmland must be conserved for agriculture except under exceptional circumstances, provided that the agencies that are provided with agricultural land for non-agricultural projects should compensate for treatment and full development of equivalent degraded/wasteland elsewhere. For non-agricultural purposes, as far as possible land with low biological potential for farming would be earmarked and allocated.
- (ii) Section 10 of Chapter-III of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 lays down “Special Provision to Safeguard Food Security” stipulating *inter-alia* that save