

With a view to improve the liquidity position of sugar mills enabling them to clear cane price arrears of farmers, the Government has taken following measures in sugar seasons 2017-18 and 2018-19.

- (i) In order to prevent cash loss and to facilitate sugar mills to clear cane dues of farmers in time, the Government has fixed a Minimum Selling Price (MSP) of sugar w.e.f. 07.06.2018 at ₹29/kg for sale at factory gate in domestic market, below which no sugar mill can sell sugar. MSP has further been increased to ₹ 31/Kg. w.e.f. 14th February, 2019.
- (ii) Extending Assistance to sugar mills @₹5.50/quintal of cane crushed for sugar season 2017-18 to offset the cost of cane.
- (iii) Created buffer stock of 30 LMT for which Government is reimbursing carrying cost towards maintenance of buffer stock.
- (iv) Extending Assistance to sugar mills @₹ 13.88/quintal of cane crushed for sugar season 2018-19 to offset the cost of cane.
- (v) Extending Assistance to sugar mills for defraying expenditure towards internal transport, freight, handling and other charges to facilitate export of sugar from the country in sugar season 2018-19.
- (vi) Government has also notified new National Policy on Bio-Fuels, 2018 under which sugarcane juice has been allowed for production of ethanol. Further, the Government has fixed remunerative price of ethanol produced from C-Heavy molasses and B-Heavy molasses/sugarcane juice separately for supply under Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme during ethanol season 2018-19.
- (vii) Extending soft loans to sugar mills through banks for which Government would bear interest subvention @ 7% for one year to clear cane price arrears.

#### **Distribution of ration**

851. SHRIANIL DESAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of ration card holders in the country in last five years, year-wise;
- (b) the quantum and types of grains provided to consumers per persons under Public Distribution system; and

- (c) whether rations are available round the year for the consumers in all the States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DANVE RAOSAHEB DADARAO): (a) Details of TOTAL number of ration cards in the country during the last five years are as under:—

Year	Total Number of Ration Cards
2014-15	22.09 crore
2015-16	23.61 crore
2016-17	23.20 crore
2017-18	23.26 crore
2018-19	23.24 crore

(b) and (c) The National Food Security Act, 2013, (NFSA) provides for coverage of up to 75% of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population for receiving foodgrains (*i.e.* rice, wheat and coarse grains) at highly subsidized rates of ₹3/2/1 per kg respectively. All the States/UTs have adopted NFSA under which eligible beneficiaries comprises of Priority Households (PHH) are entitled to receive the foodgrains of 5 kg. per persons per month and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families are entitled to receive the foodgrains of 35 kg. per family per month throughout the year.

#### Action on complaints regarding TPDS

†852. DR. KIRODILAL MEENA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the complaints regarding Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) have been steadily increasing;
- (b) if so, the response of Government in this regard; and
- (c) whether any action has been taken against the culprits on the basis of complaints received and if so, the details thereof during last three years, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DANVE RAOSAHEB DADARAO): (a) to (c) There have been complaints about irregularities in the functioning of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) including leakage/diversion of foodgrains, foodgrains not

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.