

Strengthening of ICAR

657. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), in conjunction with its network of over 700 Agricultural Universities or Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), has been at the forefront as a hub for knowledge and resources on all aspects of agriculture; and

(b) if so, the steps that have been taken to strengthen them in the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) under Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), GOI is the apex organisation to promote Agricultural Research and Development in the country. National Agricultural Research System (NARS) under DARE/ICAR consists of 103 Agricultural Research Institutes, 75 Agricultural Universities, 82 All India Coordinated Research Projects/Network Projects and 11 Agriculture Technology Application Research Institutes ably supported by a network of 721 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) established at the district level and mandated with technology assessment and demonstration for wider application and capacity development of the farmers. The organisation has played crucial role as a hub for knowledge and technology resources to promote agricultural research, education, frontline extension and capacity development activities in the country, and to make the country self-reliant in agriculture sector.

(b) To accelerate the development of new and improved crops, improved crop health and sustainable farming practices Nanaji Deshmukh Plant Phenomics Center for research was established at IARI, Pusa, New Delhi. Towards creation of new state of art infrastructure, Rajendra Agricultural University, Pusa, Bihar was upgraded to Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University. Two new institutes on the lines of Indian Agricultural Research Institute - Indian Agricultural Research Institute - Jharkhand and Indian Agricultural Research Institute - Assam were established. New colleges were started under Central Agricultural University, Imphal and Rani Laxmibai Central Agricultural University, Jhansi. Mahatma Gandhi Integrated Farming System Research Institute was established at Motihari, Bihar to provide holistic solution for the farming system in the flood prone areas. Besides these, 4 new Regional Research Stations of

Horticultural Institutes were opened which include; ICAR-CISH, Lucknow, at Malda (WB), ICAR-CITH, Srinagar at Dirang (Arunachal Pradesh), ICAR-DFR, Pune at Kadiyam (Andhra Pradesh) and ICAR-CCRI, Nagpur at Viswanath Chariali (Assam). To improve the outreach of the ICAR among farming community of the country, 51 new Krishi Vigyan Kendras were established during the last 3 years taking the total number of KVKs upto 721. The research programmes of ICAR/NARS are regularly strengthened, re-structured, re-oriented and prioritized with thrust on enhancing production and productivity for optimum and sustainable utilization of resources through proven technological interventions to realize the full production potential in all areas of agriculture and to address the critical research gaps.

Assistance for bee-keeping activities

658. SHRI VAIKO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has made any efforts to promote bee-keeping activities in the country;
- (b) if so, the total amount earmarked for these activities in the last three years and in the current year;
- (c) the number of bee-keepers who would benefit by these efforts; and
- (d) the details of assistance provided to them in respect of developing infrastructure, capacity building, marketing and export support?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The following Ministries/Departments/Organizations are involved in promoting beekeeping activities in the country:—

- (i) Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India is implementing "Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), a centrally sponsored scheme, *w.e.f.* 2014-15, for holistic growth of the horticulture sector in the country. Under MIDH, among others, Bee-keeping activities are being promoted under the component of "Pollination support through Bee-keeping". Scheme is being implemented by the State