

In order to develop the marketing infrastructure including storages and cold storage etc., the Government is implementing Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana-Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied Sector Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR) Scheme.

Assessment of crop damage due to locust attack

670. SHRI RAJEEV SATAV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is widespread locust attacks in different parts of the country causing widespread crop losses to farmers and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government in this regard;

(b) whether Government has assessed the damage caused by locust to farmers who are already facing a lot of problems due to COVID-19 pandemic;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government is planning to give any compensation to farmers and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the other preventive measures taken by Government in this regard in the coming months?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) to (c) During 2010-21, the locust incursions were reported in 10 States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Haryana and Uttarakhand, where operations were undertaken in coordination with State Governments for locust control.

State Governments of Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Bihar have reported no crop losses in their States. However, State Governments of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have reported crop damage of less than 33% in 6520 ha, 4400 ha, 806 ha, 488 ha and 267 ha respectively due to locust attack this year.

Initially during May-June, 2020, Government of Rajasthan reported crop damage of 33% and more due to locust attack in 2235 hectare area in Bikaner, 140 hectare in Hanumangarh and 1027 hectare area in Sri Ganganagar; but now, as per revised report, it has been stated that earlier submitted data was related to initial stage of crop sown in Kharif season and this area of crop loss has been re-sown by farmers.

(d) Pest attack is notified as a natural disaster by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and States can undertake relief operations under State Disaster Response Fund as per established procedure and the norms for assistance. Crop losses of farmers due to Locust attacks are also covered under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). The yield losses are assessed through Crop Cutting Experiments and compensation are given to insured farmers as per the provisions of the scheme.

Till now no State Government has reported distribution of relief to the farmers affected by locust attack for 2020-21. However, State Government of Rajasthan has informed that Girdawari/ survey work is underway for estimation of crop losses due to attack of locusts.

(e) Government of India is working on the strengthening of ground and aerial spray capabilities, Human Resources and strengthening to States.

- To strengthen locust control capabilities, additional 60 equipments were procured and presently 104 control teams with spray equipment mounted vehicles were utilized for ground control.
- 55 vehicles were procured to strengthen ground control potential.
- More than 200 Central Government personnel were deployed in locust control operations.
- Drones were used for locust control for the first time in the world after finalizing protocols and one Bell 206-B3 helicopter was also used for locust control by aerial spraying.
- The Indian Air Force, Mi 17 helicopter with customized aerial spray equipment was used for aerial spray.
- Government of India has issued a supply order of 5 CDA atomizer kits for aerial spray capabilities from a UK Based Company M/s Micron. These kits are to be delivered in October 2020 and will be fitted in Indian Air Force helicopters (as agreed by them) and will be used for aerial operations for control of desert locusts.
- Review meetings and VCs were organized with State Governments and locust control preparedness was strategized, capacity building and awareness campaigns were organized in districts, blocks and villages, advisories were

issued, training programs and mock drills were conducted. When Covid-19 struck, awareness literature and videos were shared through virtual medium to orient both functionaries and farmers. Control rooms were established in Locust offices and District Headquarters, and WhatsApp groups were created in all affected States for real time exchange of information and coordination.

- Ministry of Home Affairs has included admissibility of hiring of vehicles, tractors with spray equipments for spraying of plant protection chemicals for pest control; hiring of water tankers; and purchase of plant protection chemicals for locust control under new norms of assistance under State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). This has also facilitated the State in their locust control operations.
- Under Sub-mission on Agriculture Mechanization assistance of ₹ 2.86 crores for 800 tractors mounted spray equipments was sanctioned to Rajasthan. Under RKVY sanction of ₹ 14 crores for hiring of vehicles, tractors and for purchase of pesticides has also been issued.
- Gujarat States has been sanctioned ₹ 1.80 crores under RKVY for capacity enhancement for locust control.
- Under Sub-mission on Agriculture Mechanization assistance of 2.20 crore has been sanctioned for purchase of tractors and spray equipments for Uttar Pradesh.

Rise in prices of essential items

†671. SHRIMATI CHHAYA VERMA:

SHRI VISHAMBHAR PRASAD NISHAD:

CH. SUKHRAM SINGH YADAV:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that due to desperate rise in retail inflation rate of necessary items, the consumers are facing difficulty in getting eatable items;

(b) the percentage of consumer price index from January to August, 2020 during this year and the increase in rate of inflation this year in comparison to last year;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.