

(b) XL-35 Cotton was introduced on trial basis during Kharif 1999 by M& Excell Industries Limited. Its performance was reported to be good. Therefore, question of crop failure during last four years does not arise.

(c) The Government of Andhra Pradesh has reported that there are no confirmed reports on suicide committed by farmers due to failure of XL-35 Cotton Hybrid. However, the company, *M/s Excell Industries Limited*, was asked to pay compensation to the affected farmers for crop loss due to admixture of off-types, and they have agreed to pay compensation.

The Seeds Act & Seed Rules are the two legal instruments to ensure the availability of quality seeds and planting material to the farmers. The responsibility for implementation of these legal instruments lies with the State Governments. The Government of Andhra Pradesh is alert to the threat of spurious seeds. They have constituted a Special Committee and deputed officers from Department of Agriculture well before the commencement of the season to keep vigil on supplies of seeds and to carry out inspection of dealers' premises. During the inspections of the Special Team, 71 cases were booked, 5759 Qtls. of seeds worth Rs. 1.72 crore were seized/detained.

**Starvation deaths in the country particularly in
Orissa and A.P.**

1907. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether starvation deaths are still in Plenty in the country explicitly in western Orissa, Royalseema and Telengana areas of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action proposed to assist the drought hit families with food in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) The Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa have not reported any starvation deaths.

(c) Allocation of foodgrains at BPL rates have been made to the drought affected States.

Review of prices of agricultural commodities

1908. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have undertaken any review of prices of agricultural commodities received by farmers during the current year;

(b) if so, the results thereof; and

(c) what measures are being adopted to relieve suffering and distress being faced by large segments of the farming community?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) The prices of agricultural commodities are constantly monitored.

(b) The wholesale price index (WPI) number of agricultural commodities for the week ending 18th November, 2000 shows a weekly fall of 0.9 per cent, monthly fall of 1.1 per cent while recording an annual rise of 1.4 per cent.

(c) In order to protect the interests of the farming community, the Government has taken several measures, which include fixation of Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of major agricultural commodities and procurement thereof by the designated central nodal agencies; enhancing the import tariffs of agricultural commodities, etc.

Prices of onion and garlic

1909. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the shooting prices of onion and garlic are developing fear amongst the common people for going out of their reach;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the per-hectare production of onion and garlic are too low in the country to meet the increasing demands of these commodities; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to increase the production of onion and garlic and also to meet the increasing demands?