

(e) The open sale prices of wheat have been fixed zone-wise as follows:

ZONE	Rs./Qtl.
North	650/-
South	743/-
West	724/-
East	736/-

The Food Corporation of India has resorted to Open Sale of Rice in the non-procuring States at Rs. 950/- per quintal. On the request of Government of Andhra Pradesh, open sale of rice has also been offered to that State at the same rate for distribution under PDS.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Excell-35 variety of Cotton Seed

1906. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Excell-35 variety of cotton seeds supplied to farmers have played havoc with the lives of farmers of certain districts like Warrangal in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the reasons of failure of the crop from last four years; and

(c) the action taken against the company supplying spurious seeds causing a number of suicides?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Government of Andhra Pradesh have reported it is not correct to say that total quantity of Excell-35 (XL-35) Cotton Hybrid seed supplied in Warrangal was of bad quality. An area of 8662 acres was affected due to off-types against the total distributed quantity of 17135 packets (450 gm. each) covering about 17135 acres. It was reported that the off-types which ranged from 16 to 100% in some of the fields, could not put forth required number of bolls to provide the expected yield.

(b) XL-35 Cotton was introduced on trial basis during Kharif 1999 by M/s 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.