

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1299
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06/12/2024

MEASURES TO ADDRESS STUBBLE BURNING

1299. Shri Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) the manner in which Government intends to balance the needs of farmers with the imperative to reduce stubble burning, and the initiatives being implemented to promote sustainable agriculture practices;
- (b) the manner in which Government is engaging with stakeholders to raise awareness about the environmental impacts of stubble burning, and the measures being taken to encourage adoption of alternative methods; and
- (c) the role technology can play in reducing stubble burning, and the manner in which Government is leveraging innovation to support farmers in adopting sustainable practices?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) to (c): The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, (DA&FW) is implementing Crop Residue Management Scheme from 2018-19 to support efforts of the State Governments of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh & NCT of Delhi to address air pollution caused due to paddy stubble burning and to subsidize machinery required for management of crop residue. Under this scheme, financial assistance @ 50% of the cost of machinery/equipments is provided to the farmers for purchase of crop residue management machinery and @ 80% is provided to Rural Entrepreneurs (Rural youth & Farmer as an entrepreneur), Cooperative Societies of farmers, Registered Farmers Societies, Farmers Producer Organization (FPOs) and Panchayats for establishment of Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) of crop residue management machines. The scheme promotes the usage of machines and equipments for management of crop residues such as Super Straw Management System, Happy Seeder, Super Seeder, Smart Seeder, Surface Seeder, Zero Till Seed cum Fertilizer Drill etc. for in-situ management of crop residue and Balers & Straw Rakes for collection of straw for further ex-situ utilization.

With a view to enable efficient ex-situ management of paddy straw generated in these States, provisions have been made to establish projects for paddy straw supply chain with financial assistance @ 65% on the capital cost of machinery costing up to Rs. 1.50 crores. The intervention aims at establishing a robust supply chain of paddy straw for various end user industries in biomass power generation and biofuel sectors.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed Pusa Bio-decomposer, a microbial consortium of fungal species that accelerates process of paddy straw decomposition in the field. The use of bio-decomposer is promoted through large-scale demonstrations of this technology on the farmer's fields.

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) is an important component of the scheme and activities such as print and electronic media advertisements, awards to the Gram Panchayats for zero burning, awareness programmes/ Kisan Melas, Columns/articles, TV programmes and panel discussions, hoardings, posters and banners at prominent locations, publicity materials distribution - leaflets & pamphlets, radio jingles, TV scrolls & films on television channels, training of farmers & demonstration of technologies at farmers' fields, mobilization of school students etc. are conducted on a massive scale for creating awareness among farmers and other stakeholders of this sector.

Under this scheme, during the period from 2018-19 to 2024-25, an amount of Rs. 3623.45 Crore have been released to these States and ICAR. The States have established more than 40,000 Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) of crop residue management machines and more than 3.00 lakh crop residue management machines have been supplied to these CHCs and individual farmers of these States.

As per the reports released by the Consortium for Research on Agroecosystem Monitoring and Modeling from Space (CREAMS) Laboratory, Division of Agricultural Physics, ICAR – Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, the paddy straw burning events between 15th September to 30th November during the last year in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh were 42962, which have been reduced to 18457 events during the current year for the same period, which indicates 57 percent reduction in paddy straw burning over the last year.
