

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1559

ANSWERED ON:14.03.2005

DIVERSIFICATION OF CROPS IN PUNJAB

Ajnala Dr. Rattan Singh;Dhindsa Shri Sukhdev Singh;Libra Shri Sukhdev Singh

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any request from the Punjab Government which envisaged transfer of some areas from wheat and paddy to other crops such as oilseeds and pulses;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government of Punjab has also requested the Union Government to provide a special assistance of Rs.1,280 crores to compensate the farmers for decrease in their income as a result thereof; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) to (c): Yes, Sir. The Government of Punjab submitted a proposal on Crop Diversification/Adjustment Programme to shift one million hectare of rice and wheat area to alternate crops including oilseeds and pulses. Government of Punjab has requested the Union Government to provide Rs.1,280 crore to give compensation to farmers @ Rs.12,5000 per hectare per year for shifting rice-wheat area to other crops.

(d): Providing cash compensation to the farmers to achieve the objective of sustainable development of natural resources may not be economically viable. Therefore, the Government of Punjab has been advised to convince the farmers through agri-extension activities to adopt the crops and practices which restore soil health, improve the ground water, enhance productivity and ensure higher income by reducing cost of production. Government of India is providing incentives to the farmers under the ongoing developmental programmes of oilseeds, pulses and horticulture crops in the country including Punjab to encourage crop diversification.

Besides, the Government has been announcing higher Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for oilseeds and pulses in comparison to Paddy and Wheat. Thus, the MSP policy is being used as an instrument for encouraging crop diversification from rice-wheat system to pulses and oilseeds.