

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:180
ANSWERED ON:05.12.2005
DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE TO FARMERS
Ramadass Prof. M

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken/proposes to take steps to make the farmers aware about matters having a bearing on agriculture in relation to the World Trade Organization and genetic engineering related issues; and

(b) the steps taken by the Government to disseminate the knowledge about these issues to the farmers?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) & (b): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) AND (b) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 180 DUE FOR REPLY ON 5TH DECEMBER, 2005.

(a)&(b): Since the entry into force of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement, the Government has, from time to time, held wide ranging consultations with the State Governments and Union Territories, political parties, farmers, associations, eminent agro-economists, Non-Government Organizations and research institutions to discuss various aspects of the WTO negotiations and disciplines pertaining to agriculture.

Regional consultations with State Governments, farmers, organizations and NGOs were also held at Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Cochin and New Delhi in the year 2000. Further the Government has advised the States to set-up a consultative mechanism at state level to create awareness and discuss issues connected with agriculture trade and WTO related matters. Some states have set up such consultative mechanisms and have started holding discussion with farmers and other stakeholders.

From time to time the Government also organizes workshops/seminars jointly with the UNCTAD and non-governmental organizations as part of its awareness programme on WTO matters. The last such workshop was organized on November 28-29, 2005 jointly with the UNCTAD. The workshop among others was attended by the representatives of a large number of farmer organizations. These include the Bharatiya Kisan Union, Shetkari Sanghatana, National Federation of Farmers Association etc.

As far as genetic engineering issues are concerned Government is implementing a World Bank assisted GEF Project on Capacity Building for Bio-safety. A number of training cum awareness initiatives under this project are in progress. In addition a series of workshops have been organized for strengthening the capacity of the regulatory systems at local, state and central levels and enhancing awareness among farmers and other stakeholders. Subsequent to the release of the first transgenic crop, Bt Cotton in April, 2002, Government had organized a series of training cum awareness workshops for the benefit of farmers, seed distributors, seed inspectors and others concerned.