

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
AGRICULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:138

ANSWERED ON:20.02.2006

PROJECT FOR MANAGEMENT OF ROOT WILT DISEASE FOR COCONUT TREES

Thomas Shri P.C.

**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government has, in principle, approved a project for management of root wilt disease for coconut trees and for increasing productivity of coconut;
- (b) if so, the details of the project, funding pattern and the stage of final approval and release of funds;
- (c) whether the Government has sought any clarification from the Government of Kerala in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether Planning Commission's approval or involvement has been sought or pending;
- (f) if so, the details thereof;
- (g) the stage of root wilt disease in coconut trees in each affected State; and
- (h) the action taken/being taken to prevent the disease in the coconut trees?

**Answer**

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

(a): Yes, Sir. Government of India have conveyed in-principle approval for the project for management of root wilt disease for coconut trees and for increasing productivity of coconuts in Kerala State vide memorandum Q-11019/3/2003-Agri. Dated 18/02/2005 subject to certain observations.

(b): The project envisages cutting and removal of disease advanced trees which yield less than 10 nuts per annum, removal of disease infected juvenile palm, establishment of serological laboratory for early detection of disease infestation and large-scale production of disease tolerant seedlings, replanting and adoption of integrated farming with the adoption of INM & IPM packages for improving the productivity of mildly effected palms and farm level income in the severely affected districts of Kerala.

This project is expected to be implemented over a period of 7 years with a central assistance of Rs. 279.45 crores.

Funding pattern proposed in the project is:

Share of Government of India	Rs.279.456 crores
Share of State Government	Rs.52.2345 crores
Farmers contribution	Rs.190.7984 crores
Bank loan	Rs.1402.1870 crores
Total	Rs.1924.6755crores

(c) & (d) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India has communicated some observations and sought clarifications from the Government of Kerala on certain issues.

The observations which have been communicated are:

(i) There is a need to reassess the level of credit for the component 'Integrated Management' of the disease affected coconut gardens.

(ii) The programme should be under-taken under close guidance by the Department of Agriculture, Kerala with full involvement of Panchayats.

Further, clarification that have been sought from the Government of Kerala are:-

(i) whether the contribution from the farmers is in the form of cash or kind/or both.

(ii) The extent of similar ongoing initiatives either on the part of the State Govt. under the existing programmes or under the programmes of Coconut Development Board.

(e) & (f): The Planning Commission has conveyed the approval of the project stating that `the source of funds for the programme from the Centre may be identified by the DAC budget or any other source`. In view of the limited budgetary provisions available with the Coconut Development Board, the Ministry of Agriculture has again taken up the matter with the Planning Commission for allocation of additional funds for the purpose.

(g) & (h): The intensity of the disease is the highest in Kerala, especially Kottayam (75.6%) and Alappuzha (70.7%) and within Kerala, it is the lowest in Thrissur (2.6%) and Thiruvananthapuram (1.5%) districts. Occurrence of root (wilt) disease has been reported from Tamil Nadu in Districts adjoining the state of Kerala viz. Theni, Kanyakumari, Thirunelveli, Virudhunagar, Dindigul and Coimbatore districts.

In Karnataka the disease has been reported from Bantwal and Sulyl taluks of Dakshin Kannada Districts and Sampaje area of Kodagu District.

The Coconut Development Board has been implementing various programmes for promoting the adoption of management practices recommended for arresting the spread of the disease and increasing the productivity of the palms in Kerala.