

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3411
ANSWERED ON:15.05.2006
IMPACT OF WTO ON AGRICULTURE
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has assessed the impact of WTO on Indian agriculture;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the time by which the Task Force set up in this regard is likely to submit its report to the Government; and
- (d) the other steps taken by the Government to safeguard the interest of the Indian farmers?

Answer

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

(a) to (c): The Government of India has not constituted any task force to assess the impact of WTO on Indian agriculture. However, the Government have commissioned studies through various research institutions on the impact of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture. Looking at the trends in the export and import of agricultural items, it is seen that India continues to have a surplus positive balance of trade in agriculture. The share of agricultural imports in the GDP from agriculture is less than 4%.

(d): Subsequent to the removal of quantitative restrictions on imports in 2001, the Government has put in place a mechanism for monitoring the import of sensitive items. Protection to the domestic producers including farmers is provided by resorting to various WTO compatible measures which include appropriate calibration of applied tariff within bound levels and safeguard action under specified circumstances. As a sequel to these measures import duties on a number of items including edible oils (both crude and refined), tea, coffee, copra and coconut, wheat, rice, maize, pulses, spices, arecanut, apple, cut flowers and vanaspati have been increased in the last 5 years.

To increase the competitiveness of Indian agriculture, so that our exports can increase and farmers can get remunerative prices, the Government has introduced a number of initiatives and interventions for enhancement of production and productivity of agricultural products. The schemes implemented by the Government towards this end, inter alia, include Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm and Maize (ISOPOM), National Horticulture Mission and Integrated Cereal Development Programmes.

Further, to provide a level playing field for the export of agricultural products, the Government implements schemes such as the Transport Assistance Scheme (operated by APEEDA) and Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojna (operated by Department of Commerce) to ensure that the farmers get remunerative prices for their exports as well as increased access to the international market.