

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:714
ANSWERED ON:27.11.2006
ASSISTANCE TO COCONUT FARMERS
Thomas Shri P.C.

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has received any proposal from the Government of Kerala to protect the interests of coconut farmers who are in great distress due to fall in price of their produce, disease of the coconut trees and other causes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken by the Government thereon?

Answer

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

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. The Government has received a request from the Government of Kerala to protect the interest of coconut farmers stating that large scale incidence of pest and diseases and fluctuating price trend of coconut oil has adversely affected the livelihood of coconut farmers who constitute 40% of the State population.

(c): In order to control the incidence of pest and diseases, the Planning Commission has approved a project with an outlay of Rs.1924.67 crore with Central Assistance of Rs.279.45 crore to tackle root wilt disease over a period of 7 years with effect from 2005-06. A sum of Rs.40.00 crore has also been released during 2005-06.

Under the schemes of the Coconut Development Board (CDB) an amount of Rs.250/- per palm is provided as an incentive for removal of disease advanced palms.

The board has released an amount of Rs.24.25 crore to the Government of Kerala as a special grant for control of mite and a sum of Rs.12.11 crore is still available with the State Government.

As soon as the outbreak of Bud rot disease was noticed in the hilly areas of Kozhikode district during October/November, 2005 a sum of Rs.1.31 crore was released for the control of the disease by adopting integrated pest management and integrated nutrient management.

In order to contain the price fluctuations, a number of measures have been taken by the Government. Apart from promoting product diversification and product utilization for value addition, the Government of India regularly announces sufficiently in advance the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of milling copra and ball copra for the benefit of the coconut farmers. The MSP for 2006 season was fixed at Rs.3590/- per quintal for milling copra and Rs.3840/- per quintal for ball copra.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry regularly monitors the import of sensitive items including edible oil like coconut oil and dessicated coconut powder. Edible oils have also been kept in the negative/sensitive list of items under the various Free Trade Agreements (FTA) to protect the interest of the farmers except under the ASEAN FTA in which the matter is under negotiation. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is doing its best to improve the terms and conditions of ASEAN FTA to further safeguard the interest of Indian coconut farmers.