

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2928
ANSWERED ON:03.09.2007
AGRICULTURE PRODUCE (GRADING AND MARKETING) ACT,1937
Tripathy Shri Braja Kishore

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Agriculture Produce (Grading and Marketing) Act, 1937 fixes quality standards;
- (b) if so, whether the Government considers prescribing the purity standards stipulated by codex/International Standard Organisations to enable Indian products compete in the International Market;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the names of the agricultural products approved so far by the core group on harmonization of fruits and vegetables; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to improve the grading methods for agricultural products for export purposes?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir.

(c): The Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marketing) Act, 1937 empowers the Central Government to make Rules for:

- (i) Fixing grade designation to indicate quality of framing schedule article.
- (ii) Defining the quality indicated by every grade designation, and
- (iii) Specifying grade designation mark to represent particular grade designation.

The Standards notified as per the provision of the above Act are popularly called Agmark Standards.

In order to make Indian produce compete in the International market, the standards framed under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 and International standards framed by Codex Alimentarius Commission, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), European Commission (EC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), etc. are taken into consideration while fixing/ re-fixing the Agmark Standards. However, the characteristic and intrinsic quality of Indian produce is kept in consideration while fixing the standards, which are framed in a scientific manner.

(d): The Core Group on Harmonization of Fruits and Vegetables has so far approved the names of 32 fruits and vegetables. Out of these, Agmark Standards of 18 fruit and vegetables, namely, table grapes, litchi, mangoes, pineapple, pomegranate, guavas, shelling peas, sugar snap peas, brussle sprouts, headed cabbage, ribbed celery, spinach, bananas, papayas, plums, tomatoes, garlic and onion drafted by the Core Group have been notified under the provision of Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act,1937.

The approved notification for notifying the Standards of remaining 14 fruit and vegetables, namely, strawberries, cherries, melons, water melons, beans, cauliflowers, pears, okra, chillies, capsicum, sapota, custard apple, gherkin and carrots has been sent to the Government of India Press for publication.

(e): The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has set up a Standing Committee on fresh fruits and vegetables under the Chairmanship of the Chairman, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) to look into formulation of export standards for fresh fruits and vegetables. The composition of Committee includes members from the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI), Director General of Health Services, Bureau of Indian Standards, Export Inspection Council, Trade etc. European Commission has approved India's procedure for pre-shipment inspection for export of fresh fruit and vegetable to European Union. Agricultural Marketing Adviser has been notified an official authority and DMI as inspection body for the purpose. Director General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry has notified DMI as an official certification agency for export of fresh fruit and vegetables for export to European Union. The certification is voluntary in nature. Grade standards harmonized with international standards have been notified so that fruit and vegetables graded as per these standards are acceptable in importing countries.

The pack houses with facilities for grading are permitted to certify under Agmark. Private Laboratories with expertise have been approved to grade the fruit and vegetables for export purposes. The chemists appointed by these laboratories have been trained in grading by the experts. Officers of DMI have also been trained in grading and certification.