

14

**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE
(1998-99)**

TWELFTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
(DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION)**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(1998-99)**

*[Action taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations
contained in the Eighth Report of the Standing Committee
on Agriculture (1998-99)]*

FOURTEENTH REPORT



सत्यमेव जयते

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 1999/Chaitra, 1921 (Saka)

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N 8.14

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(1998-99)

(TWELFTH LOK SABHA)

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(DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION)

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(1998-99)

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Standing Committee on Agriculture (1998-99)]*

22 APR 1999
Presented to Lok Sabha on 15 April, 1999
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 15 April, 1999



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE
(1998-99)

Shri Kinjarapu Yerrannaidu — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Ramchandra Baina
3. Shri D.C. Sreekantappa
4. Shri Nandkumar Singh Chauhan
5. Dr. Ramkrishna Kusmaria
6. Shri Baliram Kashyap
7. Smt. Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo
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11. Shri Bhupinder Singh Hooda
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28. Shri Ram Shanker
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- *30. Shri C. Suresh Reddy

Rajya Sabha

31. Shri Ghufuran Azam
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35. Shri Ramnarayan Goswami
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37. Shri H.K. Javare Gowda
38. Shri T.M. Venkatachalam
39. Shri Sharief-Ud-Din Shariq
40. Shri Sukh Dev Singh Dhindsa
41. Shri Aimaduddin Ahmad Khan (Durru)
42. Dr. Ramendra Kumar Yadav "Ravi"
43. Shri Sangh Priya Gautam
44. Shri Devi Lal
45. Prof. M. Sankaralingam

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Shri G.C. Malhotra | — | <i>Additional Secretary</i> |
| 2. Shri Joginder Singh | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i> |
| 3. Shri S. Balshekar | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |
| 4. Shri K.L. Arora | — | <i>Assistant Director</i> |
| 5. Shri Anil Kumar | — | <i>Reporting Officer</i> |

*Nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 18th March, 1999 in place of Lt. Gen. (Retd.) N. Foley who ceased to be a Member of the Committee consequent upon his nomination to DRSC on Defence w.e.f. 18th March, 1999.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (1998-99) having been authorised by the Committee to submit Report on their behalf, present this Fourteenth Report on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (1998-99) (Twelfth Lok Sabha), on Demands for Grants (1998-99) of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research and Education).

2. The Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (1998-99) on Demands for Grants (1998-99) of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research and Education) was presented to Lok Sabha on 7th July, 1998. The Department of Agricultural Research and Education was requested to furnish action taken replies of the Government to the recommendations contained in the Eighth Report. The replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received.

3. The Committee considered these action taken replies furnished by the Government in its sitting held on 22nd March, 1999, approved the draft comments and adopted the Fourteenth Report. Minutes of the sitting are placed in Appendix I.

4. An analysis of the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Eighth Report (12th Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given in Appendix II.

NEW DELHI;
22nd March, 1999
1st Chaitra, 1921 (Saka)

KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Agriculture.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee on Agriculture deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Eighth Report (Twelfth Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (1998-99) on Demands for Grants (1998-99) of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research & Education) which was presented to the Lok Sabha on 7th July, 1998 and laid in Rajya Sabha on 9th July, 1998.

2. Action taken replies have been received from the Government in respect of all the 23 recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorised as follows:

- (i) Recommendations/Observations that have been accepted by the Government (Chapter II of the Report)

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 22 & 23.

(Total 13)

- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies (Chapter III of the Report)

Recommendation Sl. No. 21

(Total 1)

- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which reply of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee (Chapter IV of the Report to be commented upon in Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 4, 10 & 11

(Total 3)

- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited (Chapter V of the Report)

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 7, 9, 17 & 20

(Total 6)

3. The Committee will now deal with the recommendations which have not been accepted and have been included in Chapter IV of the Report.

Recommendation Sl. No. 4 (Para Nos. 3.13 to 3.15)

One time Catch up Grant

1.4 In their Eighth Report on Demands for Grants (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.13 to 3.15 the Committee had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee in their 2nd Report on Demands for Grants 1996-97 had strongly recommended that DARE/ICAR should be provided an independent catch up grant of Rs. 500 crore during the IX Plan so that the process of technology development in agricultural research could be globally competitive and relevant.

In pursuance of the recommendation, the Planning Commission has allocated Rs. 400 crore as a one time catch up grant as a part of the total outlay for DARE/ICAR and not as an independent grant over and above the usual outlay, thereby decreasing the outlay of the Department to the extent of an equivalent amount.

The Committee do not approve of this kind of allocation which is contrary to the letter and spirit of their recommendation to the Planning Commission. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the one time catch up grant should not be made from out of the normal allocation but as an independent allocation over and above the allocations under the usual heads of accounts. Accordingly, the Committee desire that the Department should be allocated the necessary amount in the Revised Estimates of this year.

Reply of the Government

1.5 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

This Department has already written several letters to Planning Commission from Secretary—DARE and DG-ICAR to Member Secretary, Planning Commission and also from Hon'ble Agricultural Minister to Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission for seeking Rs. 500 crore as one time catch up grant over and above IX Plan Domestic Budgetary Support for modernisation and renovation of National Agricultural Research System. The Planning Commission has allocated Rs. 400 crore towards one time Catch-up Grant to the Department. As this amount is considered inadequate, the Department has requested the Planning Commission to consider enhancing this amount.

Comments of the Committee

1.6 The Committee are not satisfied with the action taken by the Planning Commission in the matter of allocation of Rs. 500 crores as one time catch-up grant over and above the Ninth Plan Domestic Budgetary Support for the modernisation and renovation of the National Agricultural Research System which has now been rendered outdated by the sheer lapse of several decades of time. The Committee again wish to impress upon the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance that the National Agricultural Research System includes several research institutions which are 30 to 40 years old and the infrastructure and equipments in them have suffered depreciation and have also become obsolete, impeding the pace of research. Therefore, the Committee reiterate their recommendation that for critical support for upgrading and modernisation of the old research institutions including the State Agricultural Universities, the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance should provide an independent catch up grant of Rs. 500 crores over and above the usual Domestic Budgetary Support atleast in the remaining three years of the Ninth Five Year Plan period.

Recommendation Sl. No. 10 (Para No. 3.30 to 3.33)

Food Crops and Crop Science

1.7 In their Eighth Report on Demands for Grants (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.30 to 3.33 the Committee had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that foodgrains output in 1996-97 was estimated to have risen to 199 million tonnes. This was 19 million tonnes higher over 1995-96 production representing an increase of 10.5 per cent. Rice production was estimated at 81.3 million tonnes compared to 77 million tonnes in the preceding year. Wheat production was 69.3 million tonnes as against 62.1 million tonnes in the preceding year. Coarse cereals output in 1996-97 was estimated to be about 5 million tonnes more over the preceding year's output of 29 million tonnes. Thus, 1996-97 emerged as one of the best years in respect of foodgrains production pushing up the overall growth of agriculture production to a record level of 9.3 per cent. However, it is disappointing to note that foodgrains production target of 200 million tonnes in 1997-98 is unlikely to be achieved, as there had been a set back in wheat sowing due to temperature extremes (abiotic stress), an unusually prolonged wet and cold spell in November, 1997 in the major wheat growing areas. Foodgrains output in 1997-98 may end up at 194.1 million tonnes with decline in production of wheat and coarse cereals. Such decline in foodgrains production is also indicative of the failure of research to sufficiently address the problem areas.

The Committee are surprised to know that time lag in transfer of technology was also one of the factors responsible for a fall in the production. The Committee are also very much concerned at the non-availability of hybrid seeds in the country. 55 per cent of the hybrid seed is produced by the private sector and is available at high rates. Furthermore, it was disheartening to note that the public sector companies of North India refuse to take up hybrid seed production. The Committee view these matters very seriously and are concerned at the shortfall in foodgrains production and also about the time lag in the transfer of technology, the monopolisation by private sector and the utter negligence of the seed sector by the public sector.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that immediate action should be initiated to propagate the use of hybrid seeds by small and marginal farmers and a schemes should be devised wherein hybrid seed are made available to the small and marginal farmers at a subsidised price from the KVKs and on No Loss No Profit basis to other farmers. The Committee also recommend that strict action should be taken against those public sector undertakings in Northern India who refuse to produce hybrid seeds in large quantities in their farms. It should be made compulsory for them to produce a certain fixed percentage of hybrid variety out of the total production of seeds to enable the

farmers to achieve the production of foodgrains through increase in productivity.

The Committee recommend that the Directorate of Wheat Research should be strengthened by higher allocation so that meaningful research is conducted through the improved infrastructure available with the Directorate.

Reply of the Government

1.8 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

1996-97 was the best year for foodgrain production, there being record production that is 199.32 million tonnes.

The 1997-98 was an abnormal year with respect to rainfall, due to which foodgrain production was lower than the target (194.13 million tonnes against the target of 200 million tonnes).

The foodgrain production during 1996-97 and 1997-98 is as under:

Foodgrains	Production in million tonnes	
	1996-97	1997-98
Rice	81.31	83.52
Wheat	69.27	66.38
Coarse cereals	34.28	31.15
Jowar	11.09	8.16
Bajra	7.91	7.66
Maize	10.61	11.15
Other (barley and small millets)	4.67	4.17

In spite of very abnormal year, rice production has increased. However, there has been some reduction in wheat and coarse cereals. Among coarse cereals, maize production has increased, sorghum

production has decreased and for other coarse cereals there is not much change.

During the wheat crop season of 1997-98, there were unprecedented rains from the month of November onwards over the entire Indo-Gangetic plains stretching to almost up to 10 January, 1998. As a result, there was a considerable delay in the sowing of wheat. Late sown wheat occupied about 40 to 50% of the area in the Indo-gangetic plains.

Normal sown wheat also was unfortunately affected due to the rains in April resulting in lodging. It is only because of the fact that the currently recommended varieties are disease and stress (temperature extremes) tolerant that the wheat production as high as 66.38 million tonnes was achieved despite very bad weather.

Jowar production declined during kharif season due to near crop failures as a result of delayed start of monsoons in the parts of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. During rabi season there was abnormal excess rainfall which accentuated the incidence of leaf diseases. However, it is added that sorghum varieties and hybrids have reasonable drought tolerance and disease resistance, but 1997-98 was an abnormal year. The reduction in the production of bajra was due to delayed monsoon in Maharashtra.

Foodgrain production over a large period should be seen in the context of effectiveness of research system. The foodgrain production during 1990's is given below from which it is very apparent that foodgrain production has been increasing.

Year	Foodgrain production in million tonnes
1990-91	176.39
1991-92	168.38
1992-93	179.48
1993-94	184.26
1994-95	191.50
1995-96	180.42
1996-97	199.32
1997-98	194.13

ICAR has specific programmes to expedite the transfer of technology. In case of improved varieties and production technology. Frontline Demonstrations are also being conducted for this purpose. Adoption of improved varieties and hybrids is fairly high. For example, in important crops like wheat and rice, there has been very rapid spread of new varieties (e.g. PBW 343, WH 542 and UP 2338 of wheat; and Pusa-44 and PR-111 of rice in north-west Indo-Gangetic plains). However, in case of coarse cereals, the time required for the transfer of technology is longer because of their less economic importance, lesser attention of developmental agencies, cultivation under difficult and diverse situations etc. The situation is being remedied through frontline demonstrations and further efforts are being made for transfer of technology.

India is the first country in the world to have developed hybrids in case of crops such as cotton, castor, pearl millet and pigeonpea. Hybrids have been developed in non-conventional crops like rice and safflower. Special projects have been launched to augment the development and production of hybrid seeds. Further, hybrid research and development is envisaged to be strengthened under the mega-project, National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) with the help of the World Bank. The ICAR has the responsibility of producing nucleus and breeder seed/inbred lines or parents of the hybrids. The ICAR has by and large met all the demands of breeder seed in case of varieties as well as hybrids. For the current year, about 30,000 quintals of breeder seed was produced fulfilling the indents of different State Governments.

The production of foundation and certified seed, which is used by farmers, and agencies like NSC and SFCI fall under the domain of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation.

The National Agricultural Research System (NARS) comprises public sector institutions, private sector, NGOs and other organisations. No single component may function to achieve the desired agricultural growth. All components in unison have to strive for the goals including seed availability at farmers' level. Private sector has been supplementing in the aspect of hybrid seed production. The public sector has contributed largely in the field of hybrid technology. Several inbred lines/parents of the public sector are also being used by the private sector.

Need-based allocations have been made to the Directorate of Wheat Research. This has helped the Directorate to conduct meaningful research. The provisions of operational contingencies is increasing every year.

Comments of the Committee

1.9 The Committee are not satisfied with the evasive reply of the Government which clearly indicates the indifferent approach of the Department towards Committee's recommendation. The Committee are therefore, reiterating their earlier recommendation that immediate action should be initiated to propagate the use of hybrid seeds by small and marginal farmers and a scheme should be devised wherein hybrid seeds are made available to the small and marginal farmers at a subsidised price from the KVKs and on 'No Loss No Profit' basis to other farmers.

Recommendation Sl. No. 11 (Para Nos. 3.34 to 3.37)

Pulses

1.10 In their Eighth Report on Demands for Grants (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.34 to 3.37 the Committee had made the following observations/recommendations:

The production of pulses in 1997-98 has gone down to 130/75 lakh tonnes from 144.60 lakh tonnes in 1996-97. The yield per hectare has gone down from 623 kg per hectare in 1996-97 to 567 kg per hectare in 1997-98. The yield per hectare in India is less than the world average of 798 kg and far less than 4769 kg per hectare recorded in France. The per head consumption of pulses has come down from 60 to 38 gm in India.

The pulse research programmes have been over utilizing their allocations year after year and allocation for Institute of Pulse Research has doubled from Rs. 150 lakh to Rs. 306.50 lakh. Despite the release of new varieties, the genetic breakthrough is too ineffective to cause any increase in the productivity.

The Committee are not satisfied with the reasoning that protein in pulses could be supplemented by soyabean which is grown as a food crop in India and a lot of export earnings are being generated from it.

The Committee recommend that a serious effort should now be made by our scientists to achieve a genetic breakthrough in the production of pulses.

Reply of the Government

1.11 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The production of pulses during 1997-98 has fallen due to untimely rains and heavy infestation of insect pests in the States of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra especially in pigeonpea. India grows a large number of pulse crops e.g. chickpea, pigeonpea, green gram, black gram, moth bean, lentil, lathyrus. On an average the yield is lower as compared to world average. As indicated, France has high productivity due to high input application, *i.e.* fertilizer, timely plant protection measures, good quality seed, whereas in India, pulses are grown in poor and marginal soils with very little input supply, *i.e.* fertilizer, irrigation and plant protection measures.

The Indian Institute of Pulses Research, Kanpur has the mandate to coordinate and conduct research for the improvement of pulse crops in the country. The concerted efforts of the institutes through the research network currently in operation in different agricultural universities has been successful in evolving improved production technology of pulses including release of improved varieties with higher yield potential. In the last 5 years more than 25 varieties of pulse crops have been released for cultivation. Many of these varieties have built in resistance to diseases which cause unstability in production year after year. These include resistance to wilt, ascochyta blight in case of gram, wilt, sterility mosaic and alternaria blight in pigeonpea, yellow mosaic virus, powdery mildew, in case of green gram and black gram, powdery mildew in case of peas and lentils. The improved varieties having resistance to the diseases have yield potential of 2—2.5 tonnes/ha. In case of gram, pigeonpea and 1.5 to 2.0 tonnes/ha. in case of lentil and peas.

As a result of adoption of these varieties with the improved package of production the productivity of many pulse crops has shown increasing trend in the last few years. Similarly the short duration improved varieties of pulses have found new niches in many non-traditional areas with higher level of productivity. For example, both the production and productivity of chickpea has shown remarkable

improvement in the major chickpea growing State of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and non-traditional States of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The productivity of chickpea in Madhya Pradesh and Haryana has risen to 922 kg/ha. and 900 kg/ha. compared to 664 kg/ha in Madhya Pradesh and 677 kg/ha. in Haryana respectively in 1986-87.

Soyabean is considered to be good source of protein for human consumption. At present, India is exporting substantial quantity of soymeal to other countries to earn foreign exchange. Diversion of part of this for processed soymeal is certainly in the interest of our population to check serious malnutrition.

For intensification of research on pulses, the National Institute of Pulses was established at Kanpur during the VIII Plan period. The All India Coordinated Research Project on Pulses was trifurcated into chickpea, pigeonpea and other pulse crops (MULLARP-mung, urd, lentil, lathyrus, rajmah and peas) to focus attention for yield improvement of individual pulse crops which were earlier treated as a single commodity for the purpose of research. The thrust areas of research for enhancement of productivity have been identified.

Several biotic and abiotic factors affect the yield of pulses. Among them damage from insect, pests and diseases are very high. Therefore, efforts are under way to insulate varieties with built-in resistance to diseases like wilt and sterility mosaic in pigeonpea, ascochyta blight, wilt and root rot in case of chickpea and powdery mildew in case of peas and blackgram and rust in case of lentil and peas. Pod borer is a serious pest in both kharif and rabi pulse crops. Suitable Integrated Pest Management methods are being evaluated for control of this polyphagous insect.

Short duration varieties of pulse crops are being developed to harness the vast potential available as fallows in Kharif and Rabi/summer seasons and in inter-cropping, in combination with cereal crops. In order to fully exploit the potential of hybrids, efforts are under way to develop cytoplasmic male sterility in pigeonpea.

Comments of the Committee

1.12 The Committee note that the Government have been making research efforts to develop new short duration improved varieties of pulses with higher level of productivity.

The Committee are concerned that the research efforts have not been adequate enough to persuade the farmers owning fertile lands with assured irrigation to take up the cultivation of pulses as crops in fallows in kharif and rabi/summer seasons so that they enrich their soil by nitrogen fixation through these crops and also get good financial returns, as pulses are very costly commodities. The Committee, therefore, recommend that research should focus on this area and it should be suitably matched with extension through the KVKs so that the nutritional requirements of the people are taken care of while ensuring soil nutrition.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation Sl. No. 3 (Para Nos. 3.11 & 3.12)

Increase in Non-Plan Expenditure

2.1 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.11 & 3.12 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that the proportion of Non-Plan Expenditure out of the total allocation for DARE/ICAR has been continuously increasing from 1993-94 onwards. It was 41.86%, 42.35%, 43.52%, 45.76%, 44.74% and 51.82% in the years 1993-94, 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 respectively. In 1998-99 (BE) it is 47.21%. The Committee feel that as the Non-Plan Expenditure is basically non-productive in nature, every single per cent increase in it would be at the cost of creative/productive research in agriculture which is the imperative need of the hour.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should make periodical reviews to identify avoidable items of Non-Plan Expenditure and strictly implement the findings of the reviews for observing economy to bring down the Non-Plan Expenditure in the Department.

Reply of the Government

2.2 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

To maintain the economy and curb the non-plan expenditure, instructions have been issued to all the Institutes/NRCs/PDs/AICRPs to curtail their non-plan expenditure, periodically review to identify the avoidable items on non-plan expenditure and strictly implement the findings of the reviews for observing economy to bring down the non-plan expenditure in the light of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Increasing trend of Non-plan expenditure from 1993-94 onwards is due to the following reasons:

- (i) two time increase in DA rates every year.
- (ii) payment of bonus.
- (iii) increased demand of pension and increments of pay, payment of CCA, HRA and fares and general escalation in the prices of almost all equipments and other materials every year.

In addition to that our internal resources are also increasing gradually in the following manner:

- (i) revenue receipts.
- (ii) interest on short-term deposit earned by all the ICAR institutes including hqrs.
- (iii) recoveries of loans and advances.

Thus the major demand and increase is under "Est. Charges", wages, pension etc. and not on any other new items. For expenditure under "TA", 'OC', 'Works' and 'Other Items', all economy measures have been followed at the time of allocation of budget under these heads. During 1997-98 the increase is due to the implementation of the 5th Pay Commission report as huge arrears have been paid to the staff/officers etc. Perhaps the observations of the Committee are based on the economy instruction of the Ministry of Finance relating to 10% surrender of vacant posts against which we had surrendered only 5%. However, keeping in view the recommendations of the Committee, instructions have already been issued to all the constituent units/hqrs. for making periodical review to identify avoidable items on non-plan expenditure and strict implementation of the findings of the review for observing economy to bring down the non-plan expenditure under intimation to the Council. The Department carries out periodic review of the expenditure for making mid-course corrections.

Recommendation Sl. No. 5 (Para Nos. 3.16 to 3.18)

10% Allocation to North Eastern States

2.3 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.16 to 3.18 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee are happy to note that the Department has been very vigilantly ensured the achievement of the goal set out by the

Government by earmarking 10% the Budgetary allocations to implement specific schemes in the North Eastern States. The Committee are further pleased with the evidence tendered by the Department stating that it had reallocated funds which were not being utilised for setting up the Aquaculture Institute at Madras towards the Central Agricultural University in the North-East. The Committee would like to bring it to the notice of the Department the contents of a para of the Hon'ble Finance Minister's Budget Speech wherein he has mentioned about the creation of a non-lapsable Central Resource Pool for deposit of funds from all Ministries where the plan expenditure on the North-Eastern Region is less than 10% of the total plan allocation of the Ministry. The difference between 10% of the plan allocation and actual expenditure incurred on the North-Eastern Region will be transferred to the Central Resource Pool which will be used for funding specific programmes for economic upliftment of the North-Eastern States.

The Committee recommend that a strict vigilance be kept by the Department on all expenditures and ensure the actual utilisation of 10% of total plan allocation by drawing up new location specific schemes exclusively for the North-East. The Committee further recommend that there is need for having schemes even beyond 10% minimum limit for the North-East in the field of research in agriculture, as agriculture is the prime profession of all the residents of the North-East. For this purpose, the Committee recommend that the funds from the Central Resources Pool should be utilised by the Department to develop these under-developed areas of the country.

The Committee further recommend that all the schemes for the North-Eastern States should be hundred per cent Centrally Funded and no stipulation for any contribution from the State Government should be there in view of the fact these States have to spend a substantial portion of their resources in countering insurgency and also to deal with the special problems peculiar only to the hilly terrains of the North-East and as such it would be difficult for them to keep aside sufficient funds for matching contributions towards the Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

Reply of the Government

2.4 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

Despite Annual Plan/IX Plan inadequate funding to this Department, constant efforts have been made to provide adequate funds for the research, extension and education activities going on in North East States with the aim to increase the allocation to such activities to a level of 10%. The Department has discussed with the Planning Commission regarding the Non-lapsable Central Reserve Pool. The Department propose to spend larger amount in its schemes in the North East States to come up to the level of 10% of its annual plan budget. The Department closely monitors the expenditure in the North Eastern region.

Recommendation Sl. No. 6 (Para Nos. 3.19 & 3.20)

Sectoral Allocations for the IX Plan

2.5 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.19 & 3.20 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that the proportion of allocations for the financial years 1997-98 and 1998-99 to various sectors from out of the total outlay in comparison with the percentage laid down by the Working Group requires readjustment and fine tuning. The Other Activities sector which was to receive only 20% of the outlay is at present getting 30% of the funds in 1997-98 and 37.5% of the total in 1998-99. Crop Science, Animal Science and Agricultural Education are the sectors which require more allocations.

The Committee feel that a substantial portion of the Plan outlay is being drained out for other activities which have a comparatively lower priority. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should keep a tab on the expenditure and reallocate funds to maintain a happy balance in the allocations in accordance with the norms fixed by the Working Group.

Reply of the Government

2.6 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The recommendation of the Committee has been noted for compliance and due care has been taken in this regard while

distributing IX plan sectoral outlays to the maximum possible extent leaving a little scope for variation keeping in view the realistic requirement based on national priorities.

Recommendation Sl. No. 8 (Para Nos. 3.25 & 3.26)

Pending Audit Reports/Paras

2.7 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.25 & 3.26 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee are concerned at the increasing number of Reports and Paras which required settlement from audit. The Committee feel that due attention is not being paid to this area by the Directors of Institutes. Audit observations always involve disputed finance.

The Committee, therefore, desire that all audit observations may be settled as early as possible but not later than one financial year beyond the financial year in which such observations were taken. The Committee desire that the progress of the settlement be reviewed at the highest level every three months and a report be given to the Committee within three months of presentation of this Report.

Reply of the Government

2.8 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The action has been initiated and a letter has been issued to all the Directors of the Institutes/NRCs/PDs for the settlement of audit paras. These Directors have been instructed to follow the directions given by the Committee in its letter and spirit without fail and a detailed progress report of settlement of Inspection Reports and Audit Paras in the prescribed format may be furnished to Council latest by 31st August, 1998.

Based on the information received from the institutes, there are 1306 pending audit paras as on 30.9.1997, of which 464 audit paras have been settled as on 31.8.1998. The new paras added during the period are 45, thus bringing the total number of pending audit paras to 887. The amount involved as on 31.8.1998 is Rs. 10.78 crore.

Recommendation Sl. No. 12 (Para Nos. 3.38 & 3.39)

Commercial Crops—Inclusion of Tea and Coffee into the Purview of Ministry of Agriculture

2.9 The Committee in their Eighth Report 1998-99 in Para Nos. 3.38 & 3.39 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that all agricultural research on commercial crops such as cotton, sugarcane, cashew, palm, tobacco, jute, sugarbeet etc. comes under the purview of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education in the Ministry of Agriculture. Agricultural Research on tea and coffee do not fall within the purview of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Committee recommend that tea and coffee being basically agricultural produces should also come under the Ministry of Agriculture and the research element should be taken up by ICAR/DARE. ICAR/DARE alongwith Ministry of Agriculture should make all efforts to take up the matter of reallocation of subjects between Ministries and bring these two agricultural produces under their purview in order to do agricultural research by the right experts who have the necessary wherewithal and expertise.

Reply of the Government

2.10 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

As per the recommendation of the Committee, ICAR/DARE will be willing to undertake research both in Tea and Coffee. Ministry of Commerce, who are presently supporting tea and coffee research in the country, have already been approached for reallocation of the subject.

Recommendation Sl. No. 13 (Para Nos. 3.40 to 3.42)

Horticulture

2.11 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.40 to 3.42 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that NRC-Grape, Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture, NRC-Onion and Garlic, NRC-Orchids and Horticulture, NRC and AICRP-Medicinal and Aromatic Plants have all

under-utilised their allocations during the year 1997-98. The reasons are all administrative in nature and the projects have not really triggered off inspite of being sanctioned in the VIII Plan.

The Committee are pretty concerned over the delay in the take off of the programmes and the under-utilisation upto 50 per cent in some cases. The Committee have been assured by the Government that infrastructural and administrative requirements have been completed in respect of all these schemes and they, therefore, are now ready for a take off in the real sense.

The Committee recommend that these programmes should not be delayed any further and a time frame should be chalked out for 100 per cent utilisation of funds in the coming years.

Reply of the Government

2.12 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The observation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture regarding under-utilization of funds in the Horticultural Institutes of the Council viz. NRC-Grapes, Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture, NRC-Onion and Garlic, NRC-Orchids and Horticulture, NRC & AICRP on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants have been noted. The Department is taking necessary steps to ensure that the fund utilisation by these Institutes/NRCs/AICRPs is 100% in the coming years. The steps include quarterly review of the status of expenditure at the highest level in the Department.

Recommendation Sl. No. 14 (Para Nos. 3.43 & 3.44)

Opening of Research Centre at Nilgiri District

2.13 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.43 & 3.44 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee note that there is a lot of scope for the development of Horticulture in the State of Tamil Nadu and particularly in the Hilly areas of the Nilgiri District. Hybrid seed which is otherwise also a scarce commodity for the poor and marginal farmers need wide publicity, extension and application through the Village Linkage Programme under the ICAR. One such station which is doing good work and has the potential to expand its activities in the field of

production of hybrid vegetable seeds, research on cut flowers, bulbous ornamental cut flowers, medicinal and aromatic plants in this area is the Horticulture Research Station under the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University at Ooty in Nilgiri Hills. This research station should have basic facilities such as atomised green house, high-tech green house, mini cold storage plant, poly green house, training halls and farmers hostels. At present these are not available in this centre.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that DARE/ICAR should strengthen the research institution and upgrade it through a special scheme with adequate financial provisions for the benefit of the farmers in that area and also for the spread of Horticulture as a profitable agricultural undertaking in the hilly regions.

Reply of the Government

2.14 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

Indian Council of Agricultural Research sponsors a Revolving Fund Scheme for undertaking multiplication of quality planting materials of improved varieties for further spread to the farming community. The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore under whose control the Horticultural Research Station at Ooty in the Nilgiri Hills is operating, was requested to submit a suitable proposal for strengthening the research station at Ooty under the Revolving Fund Scheme. The proposal has since been received and is under active consideration. Under this scheme, it would be possible to utilise the profits accrued for strengthening its research infrastructure.

Recommendation Sl. No. 15 (Para Nos. 3.45 to 3.47)

Post Harvest Technology (PHT) for Horticultural Crops

2.15 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.45 to 3.47 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that the country is losing Rs. 3,000 crore of revenue each year due to wastage of fruits and vegetables owing to lack of Post Harvest Technology (PHT) facilities in the country. Research work in this area needs a lot of attention.

The Committee also note that a national level Institute is being established at Ludhiana from the VIII Plan onwards. A national level conference on PHT under NATP was organised by inviting people from many institutes and universities to see what kind of post harvest technology can be done. The Committee would like to be kept apprised of the happening in this field and would wish that such technologies are evolved which are simple, compact and can be practised even in the smallest village.

The Committee recommend that the recently evolved technology for cost effective cooling of horticultural produce in low cost cooling plants should be popularised through the extension network all over the country to help the farmers adopt this technology.

Reply of the Government

2.16 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The details of the action taken at various levels to popularize the low cost cooling plants through the extension network all over the country to help the farmers to adopt this technology are given below:

Based on the advise of the DAC the Director, IARI was requested to submit suitable proposal which could be taken up under the scheme of introduction of "New Technologies and Concepts in Horticulture" being implemented by the National Horticulture Board (NHB). Horticulture Division of ICAR has requested the Deptt. of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC), Ministry of Agriculture to transfer the Technology of Low Cost Zero Energy Cool Chambers, developed by IARI, New Delhi under suitable development scheme.

Immediately after the development of this technology, efforts were made to popularise it among the farmers. Initially, demonstration was given during Krishi Vigyan Melas at IARI with a view to popularise it among the farmers.

Thereafter various organisations approached IARI to provide training-cum-demonstration of the cool chamber which was undertaken by the scientists of the Division of Fruits & Horticultural Technology. Among the first to approach was Union Bank of India and with their collaboration, a demonstration was organised in a village in Alipur Block in Delhi.

Multi locational trial on cool chamber was undertaken in the AICRP on Post Harvest Technology of Horticulture Crops at different project centres located in different agro-climatic zones of the country. Convinced with its efficacy, the state agricultural universities popularised the technology among the farmers. The demonstration of cool chamber technology was given at various melas/fairs organised by IARI and ICAR at different places in India. The Indo-Canadian project also approached IARI to popularise it and accordingly several demonstrations were given at different villages. NABARD took initiative and provided necessary fund to agricultural universities viz. PAU, KKV and BCKV to popularise it.

Training programmes were organised at the Division of Fruits & Horticultural Technology funded by organisation like DST and NHB in which intensive training was given on construction and maintenance of cool chamber so that the trainees can train more people in their organisations and locations. More than 100 trainees representing various organisations viz. NHB, NDDB, NAFED, State Universities, State Departments, NGOs and private organisations have taken the training at IARI for this purpose.

Once the zero energy cool chamber, i.e., the small sized one was found to be acceptable, the council (ICAR) emphasized the need for development of commercial size chamber. Accordingly, the scientists of the IARI carried out research and developed the commercial size cool chamber. After the development the necessary drawing of the big size chamber was given to the principal investigators of 8 State Agricultural Universities during the workshop held at BCKV, Kalyani in the year 1994 to take up multi-locational trial of the cool chamber.

Having been convinced with the technology, the ICAR recently has taken initiative to construct 500 units of cool chamber in different locations of the country. The Ministry of Food Processing Industry has also taken a big step to popularise the cool chamber in different states of the country for the benefits of the farmers.

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries with the help of the scientists of IARI who have developed the above technology, has prepared an Action Plan for dissemination and transfer of technology of "Low Cost Cool Chamber" to NGOs, Cooperative societies, Agro Industries Corporations, Agricultural Universities, National Horticulture Board, NCDC (for the larger cool chamber costing around Rs. 3.00

lakh) and to individual farmers for the similar cool chamber(costing around Rs. 2000/).

Recommendation Sl. No. 16 (Para Nos. 3.48 & 3.49)

Natural Resource Management

2.17 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.48 & 3.49 had made the following observations/recommendation:

Indian Institute of Soil Science (IISS), Bhopal and Water Technology Centre for Eastern Region (WTCER), Bhubaneshwar have not been able to utilise their allocations in the last year. The reasons advanced were: slow building construction and the diversion of funds in the Natural Resource Management Division.

The Committee observe and recommend that these prestigious projects of the Eastern Region have not progressed well and therefore more stress should be given to make them fully functional by enhancing the allocation and by speeding up the works.

Reply of the Government

2.18 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The points raised by the Committee have been noted and the Director, IISS, Bhopal has been requested to ensure utilisation of budget to future research mandate of the Institute. A portion of the Office-cum-Laboratory Building has been put to use and expeditious efforts are being made to take over the rest of the building by December, 1998. The main Office-cum-Laboratory Building at Water Technology Centre for Eastern Region, Bhubaneshwar has become functional from April, 1998.

Recommendation Sl. No. 18 (Para Nos. 3.55 & 3.56)

Continuous Shortfall under Fisheries Sector

2.19 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.55 & 3.56 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe a continuous trend of under-utilisation of funds by (i) Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA);

(ii) NRC-Coldwater Fisheries (NRCCWF); (iii) Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE) for the last six years. The reasons for under-utilisation of funds and present status of affairs are stated to be (i) Administrative delay in handling over land at Chennai by State Government to CIBA for construction of permanent office-cum-laboratory complex. The land has since been taken over and the estimates from CPWD are ready for taking construction activities, (ii) Technical and administrative delay in acquisition of land at Bhimtal by NRCCWF. The land has since been acquired and the centre has been asked to submit the master plan, (iii) Construction could not be undertaken by CIFE as part of their land falls within the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) limits. Survey of land has been completed by the Chief Hydrographer of India as per the Supreme Court judgement and Government of Maharashtra has given permission.

The Committee are happy to note that long pending problems in acquiring lands by all the three centres, namely CIBA, NRCCWF and CIFE have now been sorted out and lands have been acquired. The Committee, therefore, emphatically recommend that dedicated efforts on the part of the Department as well as the Centres/Institutes concerned should be made for quick clearance of all the formalities like estimations (CIBA), submitting master plan (NRCCWF) and minor readjustment in the Plan (CIFE) and the Government should immediately start construction activities in full swing in all these places. The Committee desire to see the completion of construction activities in CIBA, NRCCWF and CIFE within a year.

Reply of the Government

2.20 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

Reasons for shortfall as under:

Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA)

Administrative delay in handling over the land at Chennai by the Tamil Nadu State Government to the Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA) at Chennai for construction of permanent office-cum-laboratory complex, residential quarters, farm facilities etc. The land has since been taken over and the estimates from CPWD are ready for taking up construction activities.

National Research Centre on Coldwater Fisheries (NRCCF)

Delay has taken place in the acquisition of land for the National Research Centre on Coldwater Fisheries (NRCCF) at Bhimtal due to technical and administrative reasons. Since then the land has been acquired and the Centre has been requested to submit the master plan. Adequate funds have been allocated in the current year.

Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE)

Construction could not be undertaken by the Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE) due to the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India regarding Coastal Regulation Zone Act. A part of the land falls within the CRZ limits. Request has been submitted to Govt. of Maharashtra to complete the survey of the land by the Chief Hydrographer of India, as directed by the judgement. Since then the survey has been completed and Govt. of Maharashtra has given permission. However, some minor adjustment in site has to be done by readjusting the plan. It is expected that construction activities will be initiated this year. Adequate funds have been allocated in this year plan budget.

Recommendation Sl. No. 19 (Para Nos. 3.57 to 3.59)

Very Dismal Performance of NRC for Women in Agriculture

2.21 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.57 to 3.59 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that NRC for Women in Agriculture had a very dismal financial performance as well as research performance during the VIII Five Year Plan and in the first year of the IX Plan. The reasons for under-utilisation of funds upto 61.82 per cent during VIII Plan and upto 78.33 per cent during 1997-98 were (i) inordinate delay in providing appropriate land on the road side by the Orissa Government, (ii) not spending the major part of the budget meant for construction of building and establishment of laboratory etc. in the absence of land.

The Committee also observe that so far 4 women scientists and some administrative staff have been recruited and the post of Director of the Institute is still vacant. The land has been acquired only recently and the funds for fencing of land has been given to CPWD.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should make an all out effort to fill up all the vacant posts in the 3-4 months. A time frame should be fixed for submission of building plans and also for quick completion of construction activities. The Government should monitor the progress of all these activities at the zonal level. The Committee, further recommend that very sincere efforts should be made by the Department to make the NRC for Women in Agriculture fully functional within next year as many years have already been lost without much of achievement.

Reply of the Government

2.22 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

Recommendations of the Committee have been taken up with full sincerity to implement them. The post of Director, National Research Centre for Women in Agriculture has been readvertised and process is going on to fill up this post on priority. The work of fencing of the land has already been undertaken by CPWD. Master plans and estimates of other buildings are being prepared on priority by CPWD, Bhubaneswar. Adequate budget has been earmarked for IX plan for construction of building, purchase of laboratory equipments, agricultural equipments and computers etc. and also for programmes to be carried on by the Scientists of this centre. A time frame has been made for development of centre including appointment of staff.

Recommendation Sl. No. 22 (Para No. 3.64)

Continuation of 100 per cent Funding of KVKs

2.23 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para No. 3.64 had made the following observation:

The Committee are happy to note that the earlier recommendation of the Committee that all the KVKs should continue to be 100% funded by the ICAR as originally envisaged has recently been accepted by the Planning Commission and 100% funding of KVKs will continue to be in force from March, 1998 onwards till any other decision is taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

2.24 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

All the KVKs have been informed about the continuation of funding on 100% basis as per the decision of the Planning Commission.

Recommendation Sl. No. 23 (Para Nos. 3.65 & 3.66)

World Bank/Foreign Aided Projects (NATP)

2.25 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.65 & 3.66 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) has been designed for reorientation and revitalisation of India's large and complex technology development and dissemination system to meet the challenges of the next century in a phased manner with the World Bank funding. The total cost of the project would be Rs. 861.30 crore (US\$239.2 Million) for five years starting from April/June, 1998. 18 per cent is the share to be borne by the India whereas 82% will be reimbursed. 100 Million Dollars is the credit from World Bank with a grace period of 10 years and there is no interest element on it. 96.8 million dollars is a loan from IBRD with a grace period of 5 years and an interest rate of 6-8 per cent. The Committee further observe that BE for 1997-98 for NATP was Rs. 18.66 crore for meeting pre-project preparatory expenditure. The Planning Commission allowed only Rs. 7 crore expenditure upto December, 1997 or until clearance is given by the EFC for this Project. The EFC document was cleared only in November, 1997. The Department requested the Planning Commission to allow utilisation of funds upto Rs. 14.21 crore under RE but could finally spend Rs. 12.5 crore only during 1997-98. The reason extended for under-utilisation of funds is stated to be non-purchase of computer hardware in the whole financial year since the quotations had to be invited repeatedly before finalising the purchase.

The Committee recommend that a project with such large implications in the field of research should not be delayed on flimsy grounds. The Committee also recommend that Department should reactivate and reorient its administrative machinery in order to put the project on rail at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

2.26 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The observations and recommendations of the Standing Committee on Agriculture on NATP have been noted for guidance and action in future. As regards, the shortfall in the expenditure during 1997-98 compared to the Budget grants of Rs. 14.21 crore as per RE 1997-98, It is submitted that action has been initiated to expedite procurement of computer hardware and peripherals.

The complete plan for the Information System Development under the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) for the project period of 5 years has been worked out and presented before the Project Management Committee (PMC). The requirement for the 1st year *i.e.* 1998-99 has also been worked out. The PMC has approved the procurement plan, the requirements for the first year *i.e.* 1998-99 in its meetings held on 26.8.1998. Process of inviting competitive bids has already been initiated in consultation with the World Bank. Further action for appointing procurement agent and training agent is in progress. It is therefore, hoped that the budget grant given during the current year will be fully utilized. Under the Organisation Management Programme, the Department has initiated action for reactivity and reorienting its administrative machinery.

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

Recommendation Sl. No. 21 (Para Nos. 3.62 & 3.63)

Incentives to KVKs

3.1 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.62 & 3.63 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee are aware of a Quinquennial Review System for KVKs. However, there appears to be no incentive for KVKs which are meeting their targets and doing good work.

The Committee recommend that an incentive scheme may be launched to motivate good working KVKs. The functioning of KVKs could preferably be reviewed annually under this incentive scheme and those KVKs which are selected as good working KVKs be rewarded suitably.

Reply of the Government

3.2 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has introduced an incentive scheme for giving two Awards for outstanding KVKs after every two years.

The functioning of KVKs are reviewed annually through personal visits of the Zonal Coordinators. The review of their progress reports is undertaken and state and zonal level workshops are also organised every year.

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation Sl. No. 4 (Para Nos. 3.13 to 3.15)

One time Catch up Grant

4.1 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.13 to 3.15 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee in their 2nd Report on Demands for Grants 1996-97 had strongly recommended that DARE/ICAR should be provided an independent catch up grant of Rs. 500 crore during the IX Plan so that the process of technology development in agricultural research could be globally competitive and relevant.

In pursuance of the recommendation, the Planning Commission has allocated Rs. 400 crore as a one time catch up grant as a part of the total outlay for DARE/ICAR and not as an independent grant over and above the usual outlay, thereby decreasing the outlay of the Department to the extent of an equivalent amount.

The Committee do not approve of this kind of allocation which is contrary to the letter and spirit of their recommendation to the Planning Commission. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the one time catch up grant should not be made from out of the normal allocation but as an independent allocation over and above the allocations under the usual heads of accounts. Accordingly, the Committee desire that the Department should be allocated the necessary amount in the Revised Estimates of this year.

Reply of the Government

4.2 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

This Department has already written several letters to Planning Commission from Secretary-DARE and DG-ICAR to Member Secretary,

Planning Commission and also from Hon'ble Agricultural Minister to Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission for seeking Rs. 500 crore as one time catch up grant over and above IX Plan Domestic Budgetary Support for modernisation and renovation of National Agricultural Research System. The Planning Commission has allocated Rs. 400 crore towards. One time Catch-up Grant to the Department. As this amount is considered inadequate, the Department has requested the Planning Commission to consider enhancing this amount.

Comments of the Committee

4.3 For comments of the Committee please *see* Para No. 1.6 of Chapter I of this Report.

Recommendation Sl. No. 10 (Para Nos. 3.30 to 3.33)

Food Crops and Crop Science

4.4 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.30 to 3.33 had made the following observations/ recommendations:

The Committee observe that foodgrains output in 1996-97 was estimated to have risen to 199 million tonnes. This was 19 million tonnes higher over 1995-96 production representing an increase of 10.5 per cent. Rice production was estimated at 81.3 million tonnes compared to 77 million tonnes in the preceding year. Wheat production was 69.3 million tonnes as against 62.1 million tonnes in the preceding year. Coarse cereals output in 1996-97 was estimated to be about 5 million tonnes more over the preceding year's output of 29 million tonnes. Thus, 1996-97 emerged as one of the best years in respect of foodgrains production pushing up the overall growth of agriculture production to a record level of 9.3 per cent. However, it is disappointing to note that foodgrains production target of 200 million tonnes in 1997-98 is unlikely to be achieved, as there had been a set back in wheat sowing due to temperature extremes (abiotic stress), an unusually prolonged wet and cold spell in November, 1997 in the major wheat growing areas. Foodgrains output in 1997-98 may end up at 194.1 million tonnes with decline in production of wheat and coarse cereals. Such decline in foodgrains production is also indicative of the failure of research to sufficiently address the problem areas.

The Committee are surprised to know that time lag in transfer of technology was also one of the factors responsible for a fall in the production. The Committee are also very much concerned at the non-availability of hybrid seeds in the country. 55 per cent of the hybrid seed is produced by the private sector and is available at high rates. Furthermore, it was disheartening to note that the public sector companies of North India refuse to take up hybrid seed production. The Committee view these matters very seriously and are concerned at the shortfall in foodgrains production and also about the time lag in the transfer of technology, the monopolisation by private sector and the utter negligence of the seed sector by the public sector.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that immediate action should be initiated to propagate the use of hybrid seeds by small and marginal farmers and a scheme should be devised wherein hybrid seed are made available to the small and marginal farmers at a subsidised price from the KVKs and on No Loss No Profit basis to other farmers. The Committee also recommend that strict action should be taken against those public sector undertakings in Northern India who refuse to produce hybrid seeds in large quantities in their farms. It should be made compulsory for them to produce a certain fixed percentage of hybrid variety out of the total production of seeds to enable the farmers to achieve the production of foodgrains through increase in productivity.

The Committee recommend that the Directorate of Wheat Research should be strengthened by higher allocation so that meaningful research is conducted through the improved infrastructure available with the Directorate.

Reply of the Government

4.5 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

1996-97 was the best year for foodgrain production, there being record production, that is 199.32 million tonnes.

The 1997-98 was an abnormal year with respect to rainfall, due to which foodgrain production was lower than the target (194.13 million tonnes against the target of 200 million tonnes).

The foodgrain production during 1996-97 and 1997-98 is as under:

Foodgrains	Production in million tonnes	
	1996-97	1997-98
Rice	81.31	83.52
Wheat	67.27	66.38
Coarse cereals	34.28	31.15
Jowar	11.09	8.16
Bajra	7.91	7.66
Maize	10.61	11.15
Others (barely and small millets)	4.67	4.17

In spite of very abnormal year, rice production has increased. However, there has been some reduction in wheat and coarse cereals. Among coarse cereals, maize production has increased, sorghum production has decreased and for other coarse cereals there is not much change.

During the wheat crop season of 1997-98, there were unprecedented rains from the month of November onwards over the entire Indo-Gangetic plains stretching to almost up to 10 January, 1998. As a result, there was a considerable delay in the sowing of wheat. Late sown wheat occupied about 40 to 45% of the area in the Indo-gangetic plains.

Normal sown wheat also was unfortunately affected due to the rains in April resulting in lodging. It is only because of the fact that the currently recommended varieties are disease and stress (temperature extremes) tolerant that the wheat production as high as 66.38 million tonnes was achieved despite very bad weather.

Jowar production declined during kharif season due to near crop failures as a result of delayed start of monsoons in the parts of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. During rabi season there

was abnormal excess rainfall which accentuated the incidence of leaf diseases. However, it is added that sorghum varieties and hybrids have reasonable drought tolerance and disease resistance, but 1997-98 was an abnormal year. The reduction in the production of bajra was due to delayed monsoon in Maharashtra.

Foodgrain production over a larger period should be seen in the context of effectiveness of research system. The foodgrain production during 1990's is given below from which it is very apparent that foodgrain production has been increasing.

Year	Foodgrain production in million tonnes
1990-91	176.39
1991-92	168.38
1992-93	179.48
1993-94	184.26
1994-95	191.50
1995-96	180.42
1996-97	199.32
1997-98	194.13

ICAR has specific programmes to expedite the transfer of technology. In case of improved varieties and production technology, Frontline Demonstrations are also being conducted for this purpose. Adoption of improved varieties and hybrids is fairly high. For example, in important crops like wheat and rice, there has been very rapid spread of new varieties (e.g. PBW 343, WH 542 and UP 2338 of wheat; and Pusa-44 and PR 111 of rice in north-west Indo-Gangetic plains). However, in case of coarse cereals, the time required for the transfer of technology is longer because of their less economic importance, lesser attention of developmental agencies, cultivation under difficult and diverse situations etc. The situation is being remedied through frontline demonstrations and further efforts are being made for transfer of technology.

India is the first country in the world to have developed hybrids in case of crops such as cotton, castor, pearl millet and pigeonpea. Hybrids have been developed in non-conventional crops like rice and safflower. Special projects have been launched to augment the development and production of hybrid seeds. Further, hybrid research and development is envisaged to be strengthened under the mega-project, National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) with the help of the World Bank. The ICAR has the responsibility of producing nucleus and breeder seed/inbred lines or parents of the hybrids. The ICAR has by and large met all the demands of breeder seed in case of varieties as well as hybrids. For the current year, about 30,000 quintals of breeder seed was produced fulfilling the indents of different State Governments.

The production of foundation and certified seed, which is used by farmers, and agencies like NSC and SFCI fall under the domain of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation.

The National Agricultural Research System (NARS) comprises public sector institutions, private sector, NGOs and other organisations. No single component may function to achieve the desired agricultural growth. All components in unison have to strive for the goals including seed availability at farmers' level. Private sector has been supplementing in the aspect of hybrid seed production. The public sector has contributed largely in the field of hybrid technology. Several inbred lines/parents of the public sector are also being used by the private sector.

Need-based allocations have been made to the Directorate of Wheat Research. This has helped the Directorate to conduct meaningful research. The provisions of operational contingencies is increasing every year.

Comments of the Committee

4.6 For comments of the Committee please *see* Para No. 1.9 of Chapter I of this Report.

Recommendation Sl. No. 11 (Para Nos. 3.34 to 3.37)

Pulses

4.7 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.34 to 3.37 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The production of pulses in 1997-98 has gone down to 130/75 lakh tonnes from 144.60 lakh tonnes in 1996-97. The yield per hectare has gone down from 623 kg per hectare in 1996-97 to 567 kg per hectare in 1997-98. The yield per hectare in India is less than the world average of 798 kg and far less than 4769 kg per hectare recorded in France. The per head consumption of pulses has come down from 60 to 38 gm in India.

The pulse research programmes have been over-utilizing their allocations year after year and allocation for Institute of Pulse Research has doubled from Rs. 150 lakh to Rs. 306.50 lakh. Despite the release of new varieties, the genetic breakthrough is too ineffective to cause any increase in the productivity.

The Committee are not satisfied with the reasoning that protein in pulses could be supplemented by soyabean which is grown as a food crop in India and a lot of export earnings are being generated from it.

The Committee recommend that serious efforts should now be made by our scientists to achieve a genetic breakthrough in the production of pulses.

Reply of the Government

4.8 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The production of pulses during 1997-98 has fallen due to untimely rains and heavy infestation of insect pests in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra especially in pigeonpea. India grows a large number of pulse crops e.g. chickpea, pigeonpea, green gram, black gram, moth bean, lentil, lathyrus. On an average the yield is lower as compared to world average. As indicated, France has high productivity due to high input application, *i.e.*, fertilizer, timely plant protection measures, good quality seed, whereas in India, pulses are grown in poor and marginal soils with very little input supply, *i.e.*, fertilizer, irrigation and plant protection measures.

The Indian Institute of Pulses Research, Kanpur has the mandate to coordinate and conduct research for the improvement of pulse crops in the country. The concerted efforts of the institutes through the research network currently in operation in different agricultural universities has been successful in evolving improved production

technology of pulses including release of improved varieties with higher yield potential. In the last 5 years more than 25 varieties of pulse crops have been released for cultivation. Many of these varieties have built-in resistance to diseases which cause unstability in production year after year. These include resistance to wilt, ascochyta blight in case of gram, wilt, sterility mosaic and alternaria blight in pigeonpea, yellow mosaic virus, powdery mildew, in case of green gram and black gram, powdery mildew in case of peas and lentils. The improved varieties having resistance to the diseases have yield potential of 2—2.5 tonnes/ha. In case of gram, pigeonpea and 1.5 to 2.0 tonnes/ha. in case of lentil and peas.

As a result of adoption of these varieties with the improved package of production the productivity of many pulse crops has shown increasing trend in the last few years. Similarly, the short duration improved varieties of pulses have found new niches in many non-traditional areas with higher level of productivity. For example, both the production and productivity of chickpea has shown remarkable improvement in the major chickpea growing state of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and non-traditional states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The productivity of chickpea in Madhya Pradesh and Haryana has risen to 922 kg/ha and 900 kg/ha compared to 664 kg/ha in Madhya Pradesh and 677 kg/ha in Haryana respectively in 1986-87.

Soyabean is considered to be good source of protein for human consumption. At present, India is exporting substantial quantity of soymeal to other countries to earn foreign exchange. Diversion of part of this for processed soymeal is certainly in the interest of our population to check serious malnutrition.

For intensification of research on pulses, the National Institute of Pulses was established at Kanpur during the VIII Plan period. The All India Coordinated Research Project on pulses was trifurcated into chickpea, pigeonpea and other pulse crops (MULLARP-mung, urd, lentil, lathyrus, rajmash and peas) to focus attention for yield improvement of individual pulse crops which were earlier treated as a single commodity for the purpose of research. The thrust areas of research for enhancement of productivity have been identified.

Several biotic and abiotic factors affect the yield of pulses. Among them damage from insect pests and diseases are very high. Therefore,

efforts are under way to insulate varieties with built-in resistance to diseases like wilt and sterility mosaic in pigeonpea, ascochyta blight, wilt and root rot in case of chickpea and powdery mildew in case of peas and blackgram and rust in case of lentil and peas. Pod borer is a serious pest in both kharif and rabi pulse crops. Suitable Integrated Pest Management methods are being evaluated for control of this polyphagous insect.

Short duration varieties of pulse crops are being developed to harness the vast potential available as fallows in Kharif and Rabi/summer seasons and in inter-cropping, in combination with cereal crops. In order to fully exploit the potential of hybrids, efforts are under way to develop cytoplasmic male sterility in pigeonpea.

Comments of the Committee

4.9 For comments of the Committee please see Para No. 1.12 of Chapter I of this Report.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

Recommendation Sl. No. 1 (Para Nos. 3.1 to 3.7)

Growth of Financial Outlay

5.1 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.1 to 3.7 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee note with sheer disappointment that the Plan Outlay for DARE/ICAR for IX Plan envisaged at Rs. 2635.22 crore which includes Rs. 400 crore as a one time catch up grant for renovation and replacement of Universities and Institutes which are 30 to 40 years old and Rs. 135.33 crore as the externally aided component leaves the Domestic Budgetary Support of Rs. 2100 crore for DARE/ICAR. As it is, Rs. 2635.22 crore is 0.301% of the total Central outlay, Rs. 2100 crore is 0.24% of the total Central outlay.

Comparing the V plan allocation which was 0.535% of the total Central outlay with the allocation for the IX Plan the Committee observe that with the passage of around 30 years, the percentage of allocation has gone down 0.295%, i.e., more than 50% whereas on the contrary it should have gone up by 200% and reached a level of 2% of total Central outlay.

The Committee do not agree with the view of the Government that the total allocation comes to 1% of the total Central plan outlay when non-plan allocation and support going to the State Universities in agriculture are added to the plan allocations. Non-plan allocation is direct charge on the Government and is non-productive and as such this allocation cannot be treated as allocation for Research proper. Similarly is the element of aid to State Universities in agriculture.

DARE/ICAR had proposed an outlay of Rs. 7800.00 crore for the IX plan out of which Rs. 2100 crore have actually been allocated. Rs. 2100 crore is 26.92% of Rs. 7800.00 crore. The Committee are surprised as to how DARE/ICAR with such a large infrastructure of 79 Institutes, 90 projects, 12 other projects, 261 KVKs spread all over India can achieve their goals set for the IX Plan with this petty allocation.

The Committee have earlier in their 2nd & 10th Reports on Demands for Grants expressed their strong views in favour of enhanced allocations to DARE/ICAR. The Committee are pained to observe that the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance have not so far given any proper attention to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture in this regard. The Committee feel that this negative response of the Planning Commission with regard to enhancing the allocations to R&D activities of Agricultural Sector is in sharp contradiction to the Govt.'s declaration made time and again about their commitment to give thrust and priority to the Agriculture Sector. Under the National Agenda the country has to achieve the very difficult goal of doubling the foodgrain production in the next 10 years to meet the challenging food requirements of the ever increasing population of the Nation.

In Committee's opinion, the required real breakthrough for increasing the agricultural production and productivity over and above the population growth rate can only be achieved by actual research work and by the quickest possible dissemination of relevant information to the people engaged in agriculture and allied activities. For achieving all this, the plan outlay for DARE/ICAR is directly proportionate to the proposed targets for achievements in Agriculture.

Committed to protect the interest of the Nation at large, the Committee, once again strongly recommend for the enhancement of the Plan outlay for DARE/ICAR in the IX plan to the level of 1% of agricultural GDP and recommend to the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance to positively consider the request for enhanced allocation to the Department. Simultaneously, the Committee desire the Department to approach the Planning Commission with the details of factual achievements and targets and other statistics and also the planned goals to enthuse them to accord enhanced allocation.

Reply of the Government

5.2 The Government in their reply have stated as under:—

A copy of the Eighth Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture (PSCA) has been forwarded to the Finance Ministry and Planning Commission to bring to their notice conveying the strong recommendation of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture calling for enhancing the DARE/ICAR's IX plan outlay to the level of 1% of agricultural Gross Domestic Product. The Secretary, DARE & DG-ICAR has sent D.O. letters to Secretary Expenditure, Ministry of Finance and Member Secretary, Planning Commission seeking the enhanced IX Plan outlay of Rs. 7800 crore alongwith a catch up grant of Rs. 500 crore for renovation and modernisation of old National Agricultural Research System institutions including State Agricultural Universities. The Department considers the IX Plan allocation of Rs. 2100 crore as inadequate and has intimated to the Planning Commission & Ministry of Finance that it would be difficult to achieve the IX plan targets set and to achieve the aim of doubling the food production over next 10 years.

Recommendation Sl. No. 2 (Para Nos. 3.8 to 3.10)

Overall Review of Plan Outlay During VIII & IX Plan

5.3 The Committee in their, Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.8 to 3.10 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee on making an arithmetical assessment of the Plan outlays have come to the conclusion that the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance have been making a simply mechanical allocation on the basis of the extent of inflation over the previous year's plan outlay to fix current plan outlay. The department every year in its bid to get enhanced allocations places before these two bodies its needs in various ways; but the final outcome is always the same for them.

The Department in the year 1997-98 proposed Rs. 1000.00 crore and finally got Rs. 331.17 crore. When seen against the Budget Estimate of Rs. 289.30 crore for (1996-97), the increase is only 14%. Again the Department proposed Rs. 700 crore for 1998-99 on the advice of the Planning Commission and got Rs. 531.17 crore as domestic budget support-(DBS) including Rs. 200 crore as enhanced allocation. In actual

terms, the money value of the grant they got is 12% less than what was given in 1997-98 by taking into account the inflationary trend.

The Committee are satisfied with the explanation given by the Department and efforts made by them in getting the enhanced allocation. The Committee recommend that an allocation of Rs. 700 crore should be given to the department for 1998-99 as DBS and Rs. 500 crore extra as one time catch up grant, if the Government really means business. The targets of setting up 25 new Krishi Vigyan Kendras and renovation of old institutions to do research work to achieve the goals, can be achieved only through sufficient allocations.

Reply of the Government

5.4 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

For seeking enhanced Annual Plan 1998-99 allocation and one time catch up grant in addition to Domestic Budgetary Support, the letters were sent to Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has increased the Annual Plan 1998-99 outlay from Rs. 331.17 crore to Rs. 531.17 crore. The recommendation of the Committee in this regard has already been sent to the Planning Commission as well as Ministry of Finance. The Department has also approached the Planning Commission to provide additional allocation for opening 25 new Krishi Vigyan Kendras.

Recommendation Sl. No. 7 (Para Nos. 3.21 to 3.24)

Pending Disciplinary Cases in the Department

5.5 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.21 to 3.24 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that several disciplinary cases against scientists and administrative staff are long pending and the pendency in many cases is more than 5 years at present.

The nature of irregularities/offences committed by scientists and other staff such as False Research Claim, Financial Irregularities, tampering of Ph.D. certificate, irregularities in purchasing costly equipment from foreign firms, conspiracy to parcel out plots for residential purposes on ICAR's land, irregularities in recruitments,

irregularities in construction of many buildings involving lacs of rupees etc. is very grave and serious and require immediate action. The Committee are surprised to note that out of 21 cases brought to the notice of the Committee none of the offenders seems to have been kept under suspension pending completion of inquiry. In some pending cases even IO has not been appointed for the last 3 years. The Committee are totally disappointed to note the highly unsatisfactory progress in the finalisation of pending disciplinary cases which mount in numbers year after year. The Committee are of the view that delay in finalising such cases further promotes corruption and misuse of official position and goes in favour of the offender/accused particularly when he is allowed to continue in his office besides hampering research.

The Committee have been informed that there is no independent vigilance set up under a Director (Vigilance) in ICAR which has a huge set up and large number of employees across the length and breadth of this country.

The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that immediate action should be taken by DARE/ICAR to get the proposal for a separate vigilance cell headed by Director (Vigilance) sanctioned. The Committee, further recommend speedy finalisation of all the pending disciplinary cases within a reasonable time frame. The Department should evolve a procedure to enable them to finalise a fresh disciplinary case within a stipulated time frame of maximum 2 years.

Reply of the Government

5.6 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

A proposal for strengthening of Vigilance on the pattern of Tata Consultancy Service report including additional requirement has been incorporated in the consolidated EFC—memo for strengthening of ICAR Headquarters.

Regarding finalisation of disciplinary cases within a stipulated time frame of maximum 2 years, the point has been noted for compliance and a procedure is being evolved to meet the deadline fixed.

Out of the 21 reported cases, the suspension was resorted to in four cases. It may also be added that according to the guidelines issued by Govt. of India that an order of suspension should not be

made in a perfunctory or routine and casual manner without proper regard to the guiding principles and where no public interest is likely to be served. Suspension should not be resorted to for petty offences unrelated to morality or the official duties of the Government servant. The above guidelines are kept in view before considering the suspension of a Charged Officer. Moreover, if an officer is suspended and subsequently let off with a minor penalty, it is incumbent on the disciplinary authority to re-instate him by treating the period of suspension as period on duty/leave with full salary. Therefore, utmost care is to be taken in such cases.

The reasons for delay in the appointment of Inquiry Officer in some cases are indicated below:

1. Dr. N.P. Singh, Sr. Scientist and Sh. B.R. Singh, T-6, CIRG, Makhdoom—The original documents connected with the case were sent to CVC for advice in 1993. These documents were received back from them only in 1997. IO/PO have been appointed in 1997 to conduct the inquiry.
2. Dr. B.P.S. Yadav, Sr. Scientist, ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Shillong. The case is linked up with the outcome of another major penalty inquiry against the accused as per directions of CVC. The outcome is awaited.
3. Shri Balwant Rai, AAO, NRCWS, Jabalpur—As another officer was also involved in the irregularities, the other case was subsequently examined. On completion of the investigation against the other officer, the CVC was approached for nominating an IO for holding common proceedings.
4. Dr. S. Bala Ravi, Principal Scientist, NRCS, Hyderabad—On receipt of reply the case was further examined and investigations made by the Disciplinary Authority. On receipt of relevant information from the concerned Bank, the disciplinary authority has dropped the case. In such cases where the disciplinary authority makes investigation, the IO is not appointed.
5. Dr. S.N. Pandey, Director (Retd.) JTTL, Calcutta-Charge—sheet to the charged officer was issued as he was due to retire. However, the point regarding involvement of other officers

who processed the purchase cases was yet to be examined. Accordingly, show-cause notice was issued to 5 other officers. On receipt of their replies, their cases were examined and it was decided not to proceed against 5 others. Thereafter, CVC has nominated IO in respect of Dr. Pandey, the Charged Officer.

6. Dr. P.L. Dubey, Principal Scientist, IVRI, Izatnagar & Dr. P.L. Yadav, Head of Deptt. IVRI, Izatnagar—Since it is a case of minor penalty proceedings, it is not obligatory to appoint an Inquiry Officer.

Recommendation Sl. No. 9 (Para Nos. 3.27 to 3.29)

Internal Resources of ICAR for meeting Non-Plan Expenditure (A.P. Cess)

5.7 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.27 to 3.29 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee are happy to note that the Department was able to generate a large sum from Internal Resources and utilise the same effectively for adhoc research schemes which has brought in a sense of competition among ICAR Scientists.

The Committee feel that coffee and tea are also agricultural produces and therefore the research on these produces should also be taken up by ICAR. In doing so ICAR would also earn profits from the research findings in respect of these high-value produces and thus it could generate more Internal Resources.

The Committee find that the cess fund collected on commodities like sugarcane, cotton, spices, cashew etc. is not made available to ICAR for conducting research on these commodities. The Committee recommend that these cess fund collections should be placed at the disposal of ICAR for conducting research on these commodities.

Reply of the Government

5.8 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The DARE/ICAR will be willing to undertake research both in Tea and Coffee. Ministry of Commerce who are presently supporting

tea and coffee research in the country have already been approached for reallocation of the subject.

Under the Sugar Cess Act, 1982, a cess of Rs. 14/- per quintal is being collected on all sugar produced by the sugar factories in India. As provided under the Sugar Development Fund Act, 1982, the cess fund is allocated to Ministry of Food, Govt. of India which is being utilised for rehabilitation and modernisation of sugar factories; development scheme of sugarcane; research projects aimed at development of sugar industry and building up and maintenance of buffer stock.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research does not get any share in sugar cess fund though researches of the ICAR in raising sugarcane production are reflected in overall increase in the national sugar production. If the sugar industry is to be benefited from the research backup for improving productivity, production and stability, financial support to ICAR becomes essential.

Therefore, ICAR will pursue for getting a major share of sugar cess funds to strengthen the research on sugarcane in the areas of breeding, development of high yielding variety, multiple rationing capability, integrated pest and disease management, molecular genetics, integrated water management, cropping system, utilisation of by-products and socio-economics including marketing and policy issues.

The cess levied on cotton was abolished during 1987 under the cotton, copra and vegetable oils Cess (Abolition) Act, 1987. It may be too early to propose Cess on cotton again. However, ICAR will pursue it after some time.

Under the list of agriculture commodities covered under Agriculture Produce Cess Act 1940, spices already include ajwain, aniseed, celery seed, coriander seed, cumin seed (white & black), fennel seed, fenugreek seed, sawa seed, chillies (dry), ginger (dry), pepper (black), turmeric (two types) and cardamom (all types).

Cashew (kernel) was also included under the provision of Produce Cess Amendment Act 1966 for levying cess. Additional item under spices are not suggested now.

ICAR will pursue for inclusion of coffee, tea, tractors, agricultural implements, mango, sapota, banana, litchi, apple, tomato (processed),

rose, ornamental foliage plants, orchids in the list of the commodities for which cess can be levied. Cess collected on these items at the rate of 1/2% of the tariff value (net) may be made available to ICAR to supplement research activity which will add to the productivity, production, marketing and socio-economics related to these items.

As per the provision of cotton, copra, vegetable oil Cess (Abolition) Act, 1987 the Copra Cess Act, 1979 was repealed. The proposal of seeking cess levy on coconut is too early as in the case of cotton and will be pursued at an appropriate time.

Recommendation Sl. No. 17 (Para Nos. 3.50 to 3.54)

Need to Revitalise Programmes in Animal Science Sector

5.9 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.50 to 3.54 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee observe that AICRP on Buffalo at RAU, Vallabhnagar (Rajasthan) was closed on 31.3.97 owing to poor herd performance, non-availability of frozen semen for progeny testing etc. The Committee also observe that in respect of NRC-Meat and Meat Product Technology functioning under the supervision and guidance of Director, IVRI a decision has been taken to locate a site for its independent functioning separately.

The Committee are aware that during 1997-98 semen doses were distributed through semen freezing laboratory of ICAR to the RAU, Vallabhnagar for field progeny testing of bulls. The UP Animal Husbandry Department was also given 35,000 doses of frozen semen for improvement of buffaloes.

The Committee are not satisfied with the reasons extended for closing of AICRP on Buffalo at RAU and in the opinion of the Committee only gross mismanagement and careless handling of affairs by the Department concerned alone are responsible for the closing of AICRP on Buffalo at RAU.

The Committee, therefore, emphatically recommend for the quick revival of AICRP on Buffalo at RAU with due provision for the improvement in its working after revival.

With regard to NRC-Meat, the Committee recommend that IVRI should locate the site immediately for NRC-Meat to enable the expeditious take off of the programme.

Reply of the Government

5.10 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

No semen doses were distributed through Semen Frozen Laboratory of ICAR to RAU; Vallabhnagar (Rajasthan) for field progeny testing programme. Semen doses were produced by RAU at Vallabhnagar as per the revised technical programme for use in the field.

The reasons for phasing out the AICRP on Buffalo at RAU, Vallabhnagar (Rajasthan) are given below:

- Keeping in view, the poor status in terms of herd performance with respect to production and reproduction traits, non-availability of frozen semen of proven bulls in spite of the continued progeny testing programme for the last 20 years, non-availability of young breeding bulls of appropriate age and the poor status of semen freezing facilities at RAU, Vallabhnagar, which are essential inputs for implementing the programme, the centre was closed w.e.f. 30.6.94.
- V.C, RAU approached the Council for review of the decision and asked for continuation of the Centre during the VIII Plan after which it would be taken over by the RAU. As the project did not have the requisite number of animals and proven semen, the project was allowed to continue upto the VIII Plan with modified technical programme which consisted of evaluation of Surti and Surti type buffaloes in field and comparing their performance with Surti buffaloes at the farm.

The ICAR has constituted a two member committee to evaluate the performance of Network Project on Surti Buffaloes and make recommendations regarding utilization of infrastructure available after 1.4.97 the date of phasing out of the unit at Vallabhnagar. The committee recommended as follows:

1. In view of the non-availability of the semen of proven bulls and further non-availability of young bulls of appropriate

specification, the project on genetic improvement of Surti Buffaloes at Vallabhnagar cannot be continued. In view of the small herd size, no well designed programme on the farm can be implemented for genetic improvement of Surti Buffaloes at this centre.

2. Committee recommended that RAU should develop a field progeny testing programme and submit the same for sanction through AP Cess Fund.

The Project proposal from RAU has been received under A.P. Cess scheme which is under active consideration of the Council:

With regard to NRC (Meat and Meat Product Technology), the action is being taken to locate a site for its independent functioning.

Recommendation Sl. No. 20 (Para Nos. 3.60 & 3.61)

Need to Make the Existing KVKs Fully Functional

5.11 The Committee in their Eighth Report (1998-99) in Para Nos. 3.60 & 3.61 had made the following observations/recommendations:

The Committee note that out of 261 Krishi Vigyan Kendras established in 235 districts so far, only 191 KVKs (73%) are fully functional, 57 KVKs (22%) are partially functional and 13 KVKs (5%) are non-functional. The reasons as to why these KVKs are non-functional have been stated to be (i) non-availability of adequate number of technical staff (particularly in North Eastern States), (ii) delay in legal transfer of land or organisational problems due to court decisions. The Committee are of the view that although it is very important to cover all the districts in the country by having KVKs in each of them, the purpose of opening new KVKs would be totally defeated if these remain non-functional. At present 27% of KVKs are yet to be made fully functional.

The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that all these 27% KVKs should be made fully functional within this year on priority basis by expediting the pending recruitment of technical staff and by efficient management of organisational problems.

Reply of the Government

5.12 The Government in their reply have stated as under:

The observation of the Committee is noted. All efforts are being made to expedite the recruitment of technical staff and sort out the organisational problems to make the KVKs fully functional.

NEW DELHI;
22nd March, 1999
1st Chaitra, 1921 (Saka)

KANJARAPU YERRANNAIDU,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Agriculture.

APPENDIX I

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY THIRD SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE HELD ON MONDAY THE 22ND MARCH 1999 FROM 11.15 HRS. TO 13.15 HRS. IN COMMITTEE ROOM 'E', PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE, NEW DELHI

The Committee sat from 11.15 hrs. to 13.15 hrs.

PRESENT

Shri Kinjarapu Yerrannaidu — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri D.C. Sreekantappa
3. Shri Baliram Kashyap
4. Shri Maganti Venkateswara Rao
5. Shri Uttamrao Deorao Patil
6. Kum. Vimla Verma
7. Shri Mahaboob Zahedi
8. Shri Mitrasen Yadav
9. Shri Anup Lal Yadav
10. Shri Bashist Narayan Singh
11. Dr. Sushil Kumar Indora

Rajya Sabha

12. Maulana Habibur Rahman Nomani
13. Shri Devi Prasad Singh
14. Shri Ramnarayan Goswami
15. Shri H.K. Javare Gowda
16. Dr. Ramnendra Kumar Yadav (Ravi)
17. Shri Sangh Priya Gautam

The Committee then adjourned to meet again on 30th March, 1999.

APPENDIX II

(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of the Report)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE 8TH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (12TH LOK SABHA)

(i) Total Number of Recommendations	23
(ii) Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government Serial Nos. 3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 22 & 23.	
Total	13
Percentage	56.53
(iii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies Serial No. 21	
Total	1
Percentage	4.34
(iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee Serial Nos. 4, 10 & 11.	
Total	3
Percentage	13.04
(v) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited Serial Nos. 1, 2, 7, 9, 17 & 20	
Total	6
Percentage	26.09