



STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

(2003)

THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
(Department of Agricultural Research and Education)**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2003-2004)**

**{Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/
Observations contained in the Forty First Report of the
Standing Committee on Agriculture (2003)}**

FORTY SIXTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

December, 2003/Agrahyana, 1925 (Saka)

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(Action taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Forty First Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2003))

Presented to Lok Sabha on 23.12.2003

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 23.12.2003



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

December, 2003/Agrahyana, 1925 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (2003)

Shri S.S. Palanimanickam – Chairman

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Daud Ahmad
3. Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel
- *4. Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava
5. Shri Bhan Singh Bhaura
6. Shri Ambati Brahmaniah
7. Shri Ram Tahal Chaudhari
8. Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan
9. Shri Adhir Chowdhary
10. Shri Thawar Chand Gehlot
11. Shri Raghunath Jha
12. Shri Abul Hasnat Khan
- +13. Dr. C. Krishnan
14. Shri M. Master Mathan
15. Shri Tarachand Shivaji Patel
16. Shri Bhaskar Rao Patil
17. Shri Jaisingrao Gaikwad Patil
18. Smt. Rama Pilot
19. Ms. Prabha Rau
20. Shri N.R.K. Reddy
21. Shri Chandra Bhushan Singh
22. Shri Lakshman Singh
23. Shri Ramjiwan Singh
24. Shri Rampal Singh
25. Shri Tejveer Singh
26. Shri Punjaji Sadaji Thakor
27. Shri Tarlochan Singh Tur
28. Shri Chintaman Wanaga
29. Shri Bhal Chandra Yadav
30. Shri Mahboob Zahedi

RAJYA SABHA

31. Dr. A.R. Kidwai
32. Shri Oscar Fernandes
33. Smt. Jamana Devi Barupal
34. Prof. R.B. S. Varma
35. Dr. A.K. Patel
36. Shri Sudarshan Akarapu
37. Dr. Swami Sakshi Ji Maharaj
38. Shri R. Kamaraj
39. Prof. M. Sankaralingam

40. Shri Gandhi Azad
41. Shri Datta Meghe
42. Shri R.S. Gavai
43. Shri Rao Man Singh
44. Shri Sukhbir Singh
45. Shri H.K. Javare Gowda

* Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 07.04.2003.
+ Dr. C. Krishnan nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 06.05.2003.

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri P.D.T. Achary | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Shri S.K. Sharma | - | Joint Secretary |
| 3. | Shri Hardev Singh | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 4. | Smt. Anita Jain | - | Under Secretary |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2003) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Forty Sixth Report on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the 41st Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2003) on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research and Education).

2. The Forty First Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2003) on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of the Ministry of Agriculture, (Department of Agricultural Research and Education) was presented to Lok Sabha on 25.4.2003 and laid in Rajya Sabha on same day. The Department of Agricultural Research and Education was requested to furnish action taken replies of the Government to recommendations contained in the Forty First Report. The replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received.

3. The Committee considered the action taken replies furnished by the Government, approved the draft comments and adopted the Forty Sixth Report at their sitting held on 19th December, 2003. Minutes of the sittings are placed in Appendix-I.

4. An analysis of the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Forty First Report (13th Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given in Appendix-II

NEW DELHI
22 December, 2003
1 Pausa, 1925(Saka)

S.S PALANIMANICKAM
Chairman
Standing Committee on Agriculture.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee on Agriculture deals with the action taken by the Government on recommendations contained in the Forty-First Report (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2003) on Demands for Grants (2003-2004) of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research and Education) which was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid in the Rajya Sabha on 25 April 2003.

1.2 Action taken replies have been received from the Government in respect of all the 10 recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorized as follows:-

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

Recommendation Sl. Nos.4,5,8,9,10 (Total-5)

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

Recommendation (Nil)

- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies 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. No. 1 and 3 (Total - 2)

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

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 2,6 and 7 (Total - 3)

1.3 The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their recommendations:

Recommendation No. 1

Allocations to DARE/ICAR out of the total Plan budget of the Government of India

1.3 The Committee had noted that the percentage outlay earmarked for DARE/ICAR (Central Sector) during the 9th Plan was a very small fraction (ranging from 0.36 to 0.55%) of the total Plan budget of the GOI at BE level. The percentage was even less at the RE stage (between 0.36 to 0.53%). The average overall percentage during the entire 9th Plan period (1997-98 to 2001-02) comes to 0.46% only at RE level. The share of DARE/ICAR for the year 2003-04 has been reduced to 0.53%, which was less in comparison to the previous three years. The allocations for the year 2002-03 and 2003-04 had also remained static at Rs. 775 crore.

It was also noted that the percentage of DARE's actual RE with respect to Agricultural GDP varied from 0.19% in 1997-98 to 0.29% in 2000-01. The Committee have been recommending time and again that the budgetary allocations to DARE should be at least 1% of the AGDP, which may be gradually increased to 2% of the AGDP from Tenth Plan onwards. The Tenth Plan Working Group for DARE constituted by the Planning Commission had also recommended that 1% of the GDP of agriculture and allied sectors should be provided for agricultural research and education.

The Committee were distressed to note that percentage of allocations made to DARE/ICAR out of the total Plan budget of Government of India had been declining over the years, instead of increasing. Its percentage with respect to Agricultural

GDP (0.29% only in 2001-02) was also lagging way behind the 1% recommended by the Committee earlier.

The Committee, therefore, had desired that the Department should forcefully present its case before the Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance for increasing their allocation at the RE stage to give a real impetus to agriculture and related activities which are the main edifice of the Indian economy. That was all the more essential in view of the present drought conditions in the country.

1.4 The Government in their reply have stated that the Department had brought the recommendations of the Committee to the notice of the Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission requesting them to enhance the Xth Five Year Plan outlay to at least 1% of AGDP. The Ministry of Finance informed that sectoral allocations are done by Planning Commission. Whereas, the Planning Commission intimated that the pre-determined earmarking of plan allocations is not in the interest of optimal use of available resources which are always scarce. The Planning Commission also informed that it would endeavour to support the Department's good projects irrespective of ceilings and ensure that good projects/schemes never suffer for want of funds.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.5 The Committee are not convinced with the reply of the Government. There is an imperative need to give impetus to agricultural research by upgrading research facilities, KVKs, undertaking initiatives in new emerging areas of research etc. for which adequate funds are required.. It appears to the Committee that the Department has not been able to present their case strongly and effectively before the Planning Commission to convince them about the need for more funds and

usefulness of their projects. Since Planning Commission has informed that it would ensure that good projects/schemes never suffer for want of funds, the Committee desire the Department to approach the Planning Commission with well formulated good schemes/projects and present their case forcefully and effectively for getting increased allocation in the next year's budget.

Recommendation No.3

One Time Catch Up Grant

1.6 The Department had been proposing a one time Catch up Grant since 1998-99 for modernisation of research infrastructure, replacement of obsolete equipment, etc. For the IXth Plan a grant of Rs.500 crore was proposed and for the Xth Plan, a catch up grant of Rs. 1000 crore (Rs. 200 crore each during 2002-03 and 2003-04) was proposed. However, the Department were allocated a total of Rs. 725 crore in 2002-03 (RE stage) and Rs. 775 crore in 2003-04. No separate allocation and commitment of funds under Catch Up Grant was given by the Planning Commission. The Committee were perturbed to note that despite their earlier recommendations, the Department was yet to be given the Catch Up Grant for replacement of old and obsolete equipment in the ICAR Institutes and modernisation of research infrastructure which was essential for upgrading and updating the research facilities available at these Institutes. It appeared that the recommendations of the Committee were not being given due weightage by the Planning Commission/ Ministry of Finance.

The Committee once again recommended that the Planning Commission should give the Catch Up Grant to the Department to enable it to upgrade the research facilities of the ICAR Institutes to world standards and the research projects/programmes are not hampered due to paucity of funds.

1.7 The Government in their reply have stated that in response to Department's request for separate and additional allocation under catch up grant, the Planning Commission stated that the 'One Time Catch Up Grant' of Rs.400 crore, to DARE, was

agreed for the IX Plan which was included in the Annual Plan allocations totalling to Rs.2749.39 crore. Further the Planning Commission opined that the 'One Time Catch Up Grant' cannot be provided in every plan, moreover, of laboratory facilities and equipment for which 'One Time Catch Up Grant' is being asked, are already being undertaken by the different Centres/Institutes of ICAR from their Annual Plan allocations. However, considering the requirement of funds for creation/upgradation of research infrastructure, Annual Plan allocation to DARE have generally been increased, year after year. Allocation for the Xth Plan has been enhanced to Rs.5368 crore, compared to IX Plan utilization of Rs.2479.21 crore and BE of Rs.2749.39 crore.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.8 The Committee are not convinced by the reply. They desire that separate funds under the one time Catch Up Grant should be earmarked which should be used only for upgrading and updating the research facilities available at the ICAR Institutes to the world standards. Once this has been achieved, further upgradation etc. which is a continuous process can be undertaken from time to time from their Annual Plan allocations. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their recommendation and urge upon the Planning Commission to make available one time Catch Up Grant urgently so as to enable to ICAR institutes to modernize their research infrastructure to bring them at par with the world standards.

Recommendation No.7

Externally Aided Projects (EAPs)

(A) National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP)

1.9 The World Bank aided National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) would terminate in December, 2003 after completion of 5 years. Many diverse activities were being implemented under the project to improve the relevance of technology generation, refinement, assessment and transfer programmes to the changing needs of farmers and processors to address key national priorities of food security, economic growth, alleviation of rural poverty and the conservation of natural resources.

The Committee had noted that there have been a number of achievements under the three components of NATP, viz. Agro-ecosystem research, Innovation Technology Dissemination (ITD) and Organisation & Management (O&M). To further consolidate the gains of the Project, the Committee felt that either the present Project should continue beyond December, 2003, or a similar programme should be started.

The Committee, therefore, recommended that talks may be opened with the World Bank urgently to extend the NATP for a further period of 1-2 years. In case that was not feasible on favourable terms and conditions another similar Project/Programme, either independently or with foreign assistance/aid, may be started from January, 2004 so that the momentum gained during the NATP was not lost.

1.10 The Government in their Action Taken Replies have stated that the talks opened with the World Bank regarding the extension and the second phase of the project during the visit of the Supervision Mission of the World Bank during 19 to 26 May, 2003. A letter for the one year extension of the project has already been sent to Secretary, DEA.

A concept note for the second phase is drafted and being finalised, which after approval of Planning Commission will be presented to the World Bank through DEA.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.11 As the NATP programme is due to terminate in December, 2003, the Committee desire the Government should urgently take up with World Bank for extension of NATP and also for finalization of second phase of the programme.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation No. 4

Formulation/approval of new schemes/projects of DARE/ICAR

2.1 The Committee are happy to note that DARE has been able to build over the years a large network of laboratories with infrastructural facilities to promote agricultural research and education. For this purpose, a number of universities with upto-date research facilities and specialised institutions and laboratories have been set up throughout the country and they are all doing fairly good work in their own way. The Committee, however, feel that the pace of research work should be accelerated and the specialised laboratories of ICAR and the Universities should take up more serious and major challenges/problems, which Agriculture is facing today. They should also have futuristic outlook and devote attention to emerging areas in the creation of new knowledge and technology with the purpose of acquiring a leading position in agricultural science taking advantage of favourable agro-climatic conditions and availability of rich natural resources and talented manpower.

The Committee observe that a large number of research programmes in ICAR are being carried on as routine exercise for an indefinite period resulting in the wastage of resources including manpower. The Committee note that as a result of Zero Base Budgeting exercises the number of Plan projects/schemes have been reduced from 235 to 72 in the Xth Plan to re-organise different activities in consultation with the Planning

Commission. The Committee have been informed that such integration is expected to facilitate the expeditious clearance of EFC/SFC during the 10th Plan. The Committee welcome the idea, but would like to observe that reduction of number of projects should not be for administrative considerations but should be on the basis of scientific evaluation of the projects and their potential. The Committee would like to emphasize that every research project should be well conceived and formulated after a great deal of deliberations and when a programme is started it must be completed within the prescribed time-frame. The progress of the project should be critically reviewed at regular intervals to ensure its successful completion within the time-frame and midterm corrections made whenever and wherever necessary.

The Department had informed that out of 25 Plan projects/schemes sent for appraisal to SFC, 16 proposals have already been sent for appraisal to the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance, etc. Similarly, 14 out of 46 EFC cases have also been sent to the appraisal agencies. After getting the formal comments / in principle approval from Planning Commission over the proposals already sent, the Department would fix the date(s) for the respective SFC/EFC clearance followed by approval of the Agriculture Minister/Finance Minister. In case of EFC exceeding Rs. 100 crore, approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) would also be required. The Department anticipate to accomplish the clearance of SFC/EFC proposals by the end of 2003-04.

The Committee are surprised to note that clearances of appropriate authorities are still required in as many as 30 out of 72 cases. The clearances are likely to be accomplished by the end of 2003-04, i.e. after completion of 3 years of the current Xth

Plan. The sanction letters for the schemes would be issued by the concerned Subject Divisions of the Department only after the approval of the Competent Authorities in the Department.

The Committee desire to know the reasons for the late formulation and submission of EFC/SFC proposals for approval. As a result of these late approvals, funds for various schemes/projects are not likely to be released in time, which may suffer on this account.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the machinery available with the Department/ICAR in regard to formulation of projects/schemes should be geared up in order to present them for timely approval of the Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance. This will, in the opinion of the Committee, enable the DARE/ICAR to launch their projects/schemes in the very first year of the Five Year Plan.

The Committee also observe that the Technology Mission on Oilseeds was initiated in 1986 and later on pulses were brought under the Mission Programme. The Technology Mission comprises four mini missions and ICAR is the nodal agency for Mini Mission 1 which is concerned with crop technology based on R&D inputs from different ICAR Institutes and Agricultural Universities. The Technology Mission on Oilseeds was launched to make India self sufficient but its objective have not yet been achieved with the result that India has to import large quantities of edible oils at considerable cost.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that intensive research may be made in the field of oilseeds and pulses so that India becomes self sufficient and does not have to depend on import of edible oil.

Reply of the Government

2.2 The observations of the Committee are noted. Now areas having serious and major challenges/problems such as (i) resistance to insect pests (in rice, sorghum, maize, sugarcane, pigeonpea, chickpea, Brassica, cotton, tomato, and brinjal); (ii) resistance to fungal diseases (in rice, sugarcane and banana); (iii) resistance to viral diseases (soybean, cotton, tomato, okra, potato, banana, papaya and cassava); (iv) tolerance to abiotic stresses (in Brassica); and (v) extended shelf life (in tomato) have been identified and research and crop improvement is taken up on these.

About 95 new improved varieties/hybrids of oilseeds have been released for cultivation. Soybean has been adopted as one of the major oilseed crops, which not only provides edible oil but also earns sizeable foreign exchange. Varieties of sesame with white seed have been developed which earn foreign exchange besides increasing the national productivity of sesame. Castor hybrids have been developed which revolutionised the castor productivity and production. Production of castor increased three times and productivity by almost three times between the years 1986-87 and 1999-2000. Productivity of two tonnes/ha of castor has been achieved in Gujarat. The export of castor oil has gone upto about Rs. 1100 crores presently compared with Rs. 672 crore in 1998-99. For the first time in the world, India developed hybrids in safflower with an yield advantage of 25 to 30%. A suitable system of hybrids development using cytoplasmic male sterility (CMS) and restorer system has been developed for commercial production of hybrids in Indian mustard.

In case of pulses, exploitation of heterosis in pigeonpea has led to the development of six hybrids (ICPH 8, CPH 1, CPH 2, AKPH 4101, PPH 4, AKPH

2022) utilising genetic male sterility. In this context, India is the first country in the world to develop the hybrids of pigeonpea. Although these hybrids have 20-25% higher yield potential, these could not become popular mainly due to high cost of seed production. With the recent identification of cytoplasmic male sterility (CMS) system, the seed production of hybrids in pigeonpea is likely to become cost effective. Short duration varieties of pigeonpea and chickpea have been released which helped in extending the area to non-traditional regions. Dwarf pea varieties and 60 days of maturity in mungbean varieties have also been released. Bold seeded kabuli gram varieties with resistance to wilt have been developed for northern and central India.

New programmes on bio-technology like development of transgenic, molecular characterization, DNA finger printing, micro-propagation of horticulture crop etc. are being taken up at Institutes. A number of network projects on under-utilized fruits, chilly, floriculture are being prepared for implementation. ICAR has well defined procedure for preparation and monitoring of research projects.

The National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources is undertaking research work on conservation of the germ plasm of different livestock using latest bio-technological tools. The main focus of the Animal Science Division will be on buffalo genomics in order to evolve genetic markers for better selection of bulls and full mothers and to elucidate the relationship between markers and economically important traits. This will enable us to develop new tools to achieve faster genetic improvement in buffaloes. Genetic selection of animals for diseases resistant is also of great importance.

In order to provide better health coverage, research is being undertaken for development of recombinant DNA vaccines and monoclonal based diagnostics. A better

understanding of the pharmaco-kinetics of indigenous medicines and of clinical nutrition will help us to provide better animal health cover.

During the Xth Plan the Agricultural Engineering Subject Matter Division has planned to give greater emphasis on development of appropriate machinery for cultivation of oilseed crops and post harvest equipment and technology for efficient processing of oilseed crops.

The Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) exercise was completed in consultation with Planning Commission reducing the number of Plan Schemes from 235, operative during IX Plan, to 72 main schemes comprising several sub-schemes. The decision of ZBB was conveyed during August, 2002 by Planning Commission. Thereafter, the Department allocated the Xth Plan outlay sector-wise/scheme-wise after thorough in-house discussion/assessment. Since the institutes of ICAR are spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, the feedback on prioritized research, head-wise break-up, civil work and equipment requirement, critical infrastructural development etc. took its own time. However, the Department is taking expeditious steps to get the remaining EFC/SFC proposals cleared. Till now 13 SFC and 6 EFC, have been cleared and 26 Xth Plan EFC/SFC proposals have been circulated among appraisal agencies.

Recommendation No. 5

New Initiatives in the emerging areas of research

2.3 The Committee note that out of the six new Initiatives/Projects proposed by DARE/ICAR during the Xth Plan, proposals in respect of two projects (Network on Transgenic and Network on Insect Bio-systematics) are under formulation, one is under consideration of the Planning Commission, and one has not been agreed to by the

Planning Commission. In case of two Institutions/Projects, the Planning Commission has suggested that the activity may be taken up in some existing Institute (s) of ICAR/DAC, which have since been identified by the Department.

While the objectives of the projects are laudable, the Committee regret to note that some of the projects are still at the formulation/approval stage. In view of the contemporary relevance and importance of the projects, the Committee recommend that the matter may be pursued vigorously with the Planning Commission and other concerned agencies for early approval of the projects. Although Rs. 35.00 crores were allocated by the Department for New Initiatives/Pipeline Projects during 2002-03 and Rs. 139.18 crore were proposed for 2003-04, no money could be spent due to non-clearance by the Planning Commission. The Committee regret to note that on account of financial constraints, no new initiatives could be undertaken by DARE/ICAR, which reflects on the sorry state of affairs in the Department.

The Department had earlier sought funds in 2002-03 for four Core Areas of agricultural research and education, viz. Agricultural Bio-technology; Bio-diversity; Bio-systematics and pest disease and weed management; and first rate Human Resource Development. However, the Department could not get any separate/additional funds for these Core Areas. It appears that the Department did not present its case effectively before the Planning Commission for getting these funds. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should again approach the Planning Commission for getting the funds for these crucial areas in its 2003-04 Plan outlay. They also desire that the DARE/ICAR should lay more emphasis on emerging areas of research and present their case more forcefully during RE 2003-2004 and the subsequent years of the 10th

Plan. In the opinion of the Committee, unless the DARE/ICAR strive harder to get a break through in the emerging areas of research, the objective of doubling the food production of the country will remain only a dream.

Reply of the Government

2.4 The Planning Commission in its reply appreciated the need for initiating/strengthening the research in new emerging areas but did not support creation of new establishments, instead it has suggested to take up these initiative in the existing schemes.

The Crop Science Division of the Council has formulated a proposal-Network on Transgenics which has been sent to Planning Commission for its in principle approval. The Division is also formulating a Network Project on Bio-Systematics of Insects.

The Division of Natural Resource Management has formulated two new initiatives in the emerging areas of research during the Xth Plan. In accordance with the suggestion of the Planning Commission, the “Network project on climate change and its impact on agriculture” is being taken up as an activity of Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), Hyderabad. The EFC memo of CRIDA, Hyderabad which includes an additional provision for this new initiative is being processed.

The “Network project on organic farming” is being taken up as an activity of the Project Directorate of Cropping Systems Research (PDCSR), Modipuram. The EFC memo of the institute having an additional provision for implementation of this network programme is also being processed.

A new initiative on Veterinary Type Cultures has been proposed by the Animal Science Division in the Xth Plan, which has not been agreed to by the Planning

Commission as a separate scheme. However, it had no objection to carryout the research activities on this aspect alongwith any existing scheme, for which efforts are afoot.

As regards to NRC Agricultural Extension, the Planning Commission did not agree to the proposal.

Emphasis is lid on biotechnology including capacity building and human resource development. Emphasis is also laid on 'seed' which is considered as basic to agriculture.

(Recommendation No. 8)

Krishi Vigyan Kendras

2.5 The purpose of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) is agricultural extension and transfer of technology to the farmers through education and training. The Committee note that out of 585 districts in the country, 238 districts are yet to be covered with KVKs. According to the information furnished by the Department, out of the existing KVKs, 43 are such where infrastructural facilities like office building, hostel, staff quarters, etc. are yet to be developed.

The Committee are surprised to learn that the oldest KVK in the country, which was established at Karaikal, Pondicherry in 1974, still does not have an Administrative building, hostel and staff quarters. Certain other KVKs which were established in the seventies and eighties also lack the basic infrastructural facilities.

The Committee, therefore, desire that priority should be given to completion of infrastructural facilities in the existing KVKs, so that they become fully functional and are able to effectively help and educate the farmers in reaping the benefits of new technologies in agriculture. The objective of establishing one KVK in each district may also be pursued depending upon the availability of funds. Meanwhile, the Department

may impress upon the Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance to release the funds for which a provision of Rs. 500 crore during the Xth Plan has already been made. The Committee feel that the expenditure on KVKs will be justified only if they are fully utilized as an effective instrument for agricultural development in their respective areas. The success of KVKs will be assured if they are able to provide facilities for testing of soil, early detection of diseases to save the crop, tender advice regarding the use of fertilizers and techniques for increased yield of crops, specially the use of new varieties of seeds and plant material and play the role of a friend, philosopher and guide to the farmers. In the opinion of the Committee, the KVKs should keep themselves abreast of the local needs by keeping in constant touch with Panchayats at village and district levels and Zila Parishads. The activities of the KVKs should be related to the kind of crop grown in the area where the KVK is located.

Reply of the Government

2.6 The Planning Commission has allocated Rs. 500.00 crore for establishment of KVKs in the remaining 201 rural districts of the Country. Accordingly, EFC Memo has been formulated and circulated among appraisal agencies.

As far as the status of building infrastructure in 43 KVKs is concerning the office building is completed/near completion/fund allocated in 35 KVKs; hostel in 23 KVKs and staff quarter in 11 KVKs.

The first KVK at Pondicherry was established during 1974 under the administrative control of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and later on transferred to the Union Territory Administration after its separation from Tamil Nadu. The KVK has

already constructed Administrative building and Hostel. The KVK at Karaikal in Pondicherry was sanctioned during 1994.

In order to address issues like soil test-crop response, diagnosis of pests and diseases, balanced use of fertilizer and other package of practices for increasing productivity, besides organising a large number of extension activities, diagnostic services are also provided for the benefit of farmers.

In order to keep the KVK, abreast of local needs, a Scientific Advisory Committee has been constituted for each KVK including the representatives of farmers/women farmers, development departments, financial institutions, research and extension organizations for formulation of location specific programmes and its implementation, keeping in view the importance of crops/commodities/enterprises of the area in which the KVK is located. This wide cross-section of representation on the Scientific Advisory Committee, including the Development Departments and Farmer's representatives, enables the KVKs to remain in close touch with Zila Panchayats.

Recommendation No. 9

Development of Seeds

2.7 One of the greatest handicaps which Indian agriculturists are facing today is supply of good quality seeds, which are essential for improving quality and increasing output of agricultural production for domestic consumption and export. There is a great potential for production of quality seeds in the country. The Committee feel that although good quality seeds are produced to some extent in the country but they fall short of requirement and also are not of assured quality.

The Committee find that India is rich in bio-diversity and has large quantities of genomic material available, which can be utilised for producing new varieties of seeds and plants with high yields and disease-resistant properties. This is possible by using modern techniques of molecular biology and genetic engineering to produce better quality of seeds, specially in relation to important agricultural crops like cotton, wheat, rice, etc. There is also great scope of producing good quality seeds and plants through the conventional methods of hybridisation because of the availability of genomic material, qualified technical manpower and good agro-climatic conditions. Thus production of seeds is an area in which India can effectively and fully meet domestic requirements and compete with multi-nationals in the export of good quality seeds.

The Committee hope that with the establishment of a Directorate of Seed, the ICAR would be able to concentrate its research efforts in this area so that India can become a major producer and exporter of high quality seeds and plants.

Reply of the Government

2.8 The National Agricultural Research System (NARS) through the All India Coordinated Research Project of ICAR has led to the release notification of a total of about 3200 improved varieties of field and horticultural crops since beginning and till yet. ICAR has the mandate to undertake the breeder seed production of the notified improved varieties/hybrids in collaboration with the State Agricultural Universities. Presently about 4000 quintal of breeder seed is being produced annually along with breeder seed of vegetables. This breeder seed, in turn, is multiplied by the indenting state governments and state corporations to produce foundation and certified seeds. The augmented breeder production has resulted in increasing the eventual supply of quality seed to the farmers

which stands at the level of about 110 lakh quintals of quality seed per year. Seed production practices for various crops have been standardized/refined.

The agro-biodiversity of the country is being collected, conserved, documented, evaluated and facilitated for its utilization for developing new improved varieties. The National Gene bank presently holds more than 0.25 million accessions of nearly 426 crop species including their wild relatives under seed bank, cryo-bank and in vitro bank. A total of 227 potentially valuable germplasm with desirable traits belonging to 54 plants species have been registered. The NRC on DNA Fingerprinting and NRC for Plant Biotechnology (NRCPB) are using modern tools of genetic engineering for crop improvement. About 1400 released varieties and elite landraces/accessions of 23 major crops have been fingerprinted yet. ICAR has successfully participated in the world rice genome project. Assigned region of the chromosome 11 of rice has been sequenced and sequence of 6.7 million base pairs has been submitted to the Gen Bank. The NRCPB has developed transgenic plants in several crops viz. rice, tomato, brinjal and pigeonpea which are at various stages of testing. Novel genes like protease inhibitor genes and lectin genes have been isolated from the plants, characterized at the molecular level and used for generation of transgenic plants.

The proposal for establishing a Directorate of Seed Research by upgrading the existing National Seed Project (Crops) has been formulated and is under consideration. This would strengthen the efforts being made to augment the availability of breeder and quality seed at the farm level.

India is globally competitive in regard to quality, price etc. for seed exports which mainly comprises two major categories namely, (i) customs production for exports, and

(ii) export of indigenously bred varieties. Seed Policy, 2002 has been prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture with specific aims and objectives to improve the quality of seeds conforming to international standards. Meanwhile action under the Seeds Act, 1966 is being taken.

Recommendation No. 10

Research in the field of drought management

2.9 The Committee are happy to note that ICAR Institutes have done a lot of research and development on varieties/hybrids of crops that are drought and disease resistant. However, a lot remains to be done in this field especially, in view of the recent severe drought in the country as well as frequent droughts in some parts of the country every year, given the dependence of the poor farmers of the country on the vagaries of monsoon, it is all the more necessary that the ICAR should focus its attention on this very vital and crucial sector of research.

The Committee desire that the Department should take immediate necessary steps to develop drought and decrease resistant varieties/hybrids of crops and their easy availability to the farmers throughout the country especially in the areas affected by droughts frequently.

Reply of the Government

2.10 A number of disease resistant and drought tolerant varieties/hybrids of crops are available. For example, wilt tolerant hybrids of castor (GCH 6, Deepak), disease resistant varieties of groundnut (CSMG 884, HNG 10, LGN 2, VG 9521, GG 7), disease resistant varieties of rapeseed-mustard (RTM-314, Aravali) and disease resistant variety of soybean such as yellow mosaic virus resistant variety of soybean (MACS 450) and

soybean mosaic resistant variety (Paribhani Sona) have been released for cultivation suited to different agro-climatic situations. Sugarcane varieties such as Co 87025 and 86032 which are tolerant to drought and also resistant to smut have been released for the peninsular zone. In case of cotton, varieties of arboretum which have higher degree of tolerance to drought conditions such as Maljari (for Madhya Pradesh), AKH 4, AKA 8401, Eknath, Sweta, AK 5, Y1 (for Maharashtra) and varieties of herbaceum (for Gujarat) are available for the Central Indian region.

Further efforts are continuing to develop resistant varieties using new tools of science viz. functional genomics and transgenics development through bio-technology. The Council has also put in place a mechanism to monitor the monsoon and rains in the country and advise the related agencies/farmers depending upon the (probable) monsoon scenario. The information has been put on the web (icar.org.in) which gives details of suitable crops and varieties to be grown under different monsoon scenarios along with the commensurate package of practices.

To give special focus on drought management during 2003, the Council has constituted a group of seven Assistant Directors General (ADGs) representing the disciplines of seeds, horticulture, agronomy, animal sciences, fisheries, plant protection and agriculture research information system to monitor the scenario of monsoon 2003 and to advocate value added information based on the prevalent monsoon scenario to the farmers. This group meets every Tuesday and updates the information related to emerging monsoon scenario and suggest do's and don'ts to the farmers. The synthesized information is displayed on the web site of the Council and being updated

weekly for use by the development departments and others engaged in drought management in the country.

CHAPTER III

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

NIL

CHAPTER IV

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

Recommendation No. 1

Allocations to DARE/ICAR out of the total Plan budget of the Government of India

4.1 The Committee note that the percentage outlay earmarked for DARE/ICAR (Central Sector) during the 9th Plan was a very small fraction (ranging from 0.36 to 0.55%) of the total Plan budget of the GOI at BE level. The percentage was even less at the RE stage (between 0.36 to 0.53%). The average overall percentage during the entire 9th Plan period (1997-98 to 2001-02) comes to 0.46% only at RE level. The share of DARE/ICAR for the year 2003-04 has been reduced to 0.53%, which is less in comparison to the previous three years. The allocations for the year 2002-03 and 2003-04 have also remained static at Rs. 775 crore.

It is also noted that the percentage of DARE's actual RE with respect to Agricultural GDP varied from 0.19% in 1997-98 to 0.29% in 2000-01. The Committee have been recommending time and again that the budgetary allocations to DARE should be at least 1% of the AGDP, which may be gradually increased to 2% of the AGDP from Tenth Plan onwards. The Tenth Plan Working Group for DARE constituted by the Planning Commission had also recommended that 1% of the GDP of agriculture and allied sectors should be provided for agricultural research and education.

The Committee are distressed to note that percentage of allocations made to DARE/ICAR out of the total Plan budget of Government of India has been declining over the years, instead of increasing. Its percentage with respect to Agricultural GDP (0.29%

only in 2001-02) is also lagging way behind the 1% recommended by the Committee earlier.

The Committee, therefore, desire that the Department should forcefully present its case before the Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance for increasing their allocation at the RE stage to give a real impetus to agriculture and related activities which are the main edifice of the Indian economy. This is all the more essential in view of the present drought conditions in the country.

Reply of the Government

4.2 The Department had brought the recommendations of the Committee to the notice of the Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission requesting them to enhance the Xth Five Year Plan outlay to at least 1% of AGDP. The Ministry of Finance informed that sectoral allocations are done by Planning Commission. Whereas, the Planning Commission intimated that the pre-determined earmarking of plan allocations is not in the interest of optimal use of available resources which are always scarce. The Planning Commission also informed that it would endeavour to support the Department's good projects irrespective of ceilings and ensure that good projects/schemes never suffer for want of funds.

Comments of the Committee

4.3 For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.5 of Chapter I of this Report.

Recommendation No. 3

One Time Catch Up Grant

4.4 The Department has been proposing a one time Catch up Grant since 1998-99 for modernisation of research infrastructure, replacement of obsolete equipment, etc. For the IXth Plan a grant of Rs.500 crore was proposed and for the Xth Plan, a catch up grant of Rs. 1000 crore (Rs. 200 crore each during 2002-03 and 2003-04) was proposed. However, the Department were allocated a total of Rs. 725 crore in 2002-03 (RE stage) and Rs. 775 crore in 2003-04. No separate allocation and commitment of funds under Catch Up Grant was given by the Planning Commission. The Committee are perturbed to note that despite their earlier recommendations, the Department is yet to be given the Catch Up Grant for replacement of old and obsolete equipment in the ICAR Institutes and modernisation of research infrastructure which is essential for upgrading and updating the research facilities available at these Institutes comparable with the best in the world. It appears that the recommendations of the Committee are not being given due weightage by the Department/ICAR.

The Committee once again recommend that the Planning Commission should give the Catch Up Grant to the Department to enable it to upgrade the research facilities of the ICAR Institutes to world standards and the research projects/programmes are not hampered due to paucity of funds. The Department should also impress upon the Planning Commission to give the Catch Up Grant immediately so that their research projects/programmes do not suffer.

Reply of the Government

4.5 In response to Department's request for separate and additional allocation under catch up grant, the Planning Commission stated that the 'One Time Catch Up Grant' of Rs. 400 crore, to DARE, was agreed for the IX Plan which was included in the Annual Plan allocations totaling to Rs. 2749.39 crore. Further the Planning Commission opined that the 'One Time Catch Up Grant' can not be provided in every plan, moreover, of laboratory facilities and equipment for which 'One Time Catch Up Grant' is being asked, are already being undertaken by the different Centres/Institutes of ICAR from their Annual Plan allocations. However, considering the requirement of funds for creation/upgradation of research infrastructure, Annual Plan allocation to DARE have generally been increased, year after year. Allocation for the Xth Plan has been enhanced to Rs. 5368 crore, compared to IX Plan utilization of Rs. 2479.21 crore and Be of Rs. 2749.39 crore.

Comments of the Committee

4.6 For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.8 of Chapter I of this Report.

CHAPTER V

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

(Recommendation No. 2)

Financial Outlays to DARE/ICAR and allocation/utilisation of funds during the IXth Plan and first two years of the Xth Plan

5.1 DARE/ICAR was allocated a total outlay of Rs. 3376.95 crore for the IXth Plan (1997-2002) out of which the total of yearly allocations (through Annual Plans) was only Rs. 2749.37 crore which was subsequently subjected to cuts at RE stage and the total allocation was further reduced to Rs. 2514.17 crore.

For the Xth Plan, DARE/ICAR had proposed a minimum requirement of Rs. 15,000 crore along with One Time Catch Up Grant of Rs. 1000 crore. However, the Planning Commission approved only Rs. 4868 crore which was subsequently raised to Rs. 5368 crore by providing Rs. 500 crore for new KVKs.

For the Annual Plan 2002-03, the allocation was Rs. 775 crore, which was reduced to Rs. 725 crore at RE stage. For the Annual Plan 2003-04 against the projected demand of Rs. 1300 crore and a catch up grant of Rs. 200 crore, the Planning Commission allocated Rs. 775 crore only, although there was an understanding at the Department's meeting with the Planning Commission that its Plan allocation would be raised to Rs. 1000 crore.

The Committee are astonished to note that despite the understanding at the Department's meeting with the Planning Commission that its Plan allocation for the year 2003-04 would be raised to Rs. 1000 crore, only Rs. 775 crores were finally allocated. The Committee desire that the matter may be taken up immediately with the Planning

Commission for enhancing the BE 2003-04 to Rs. 1000 crores, so that additional funds are made available for schemes/programmes, as per their earlier understanding, towards achieving the target of 4% growth in agriculture in the Xth Plan.

Reply of the Government

5.2 The Department had taken up the matter with Planning Commission for enhancing the allocation 2003-04 from Rs. 775 crore to Rs. 1,000 crore at the level of Secretary, Planning Commission. The Planning Commission responded that it had only suggested to the Department to bring down the proposal for allocation of Rs. 1,500 crore for Annual Plan 2003-04 to the level of Rs. 1,000 crore considering the inadequacy of plan resources. The Planning Commission further stated that considering the availability of plan funds and competing demands from other sectors, it could only allocate Rs. 775 crore during 2003-04, at the BE level of 2002-03. The Department had already requested to the Secretary, Planning Commission to re-consider the matter for enhancing Annual Plan 2003-04 outlay to Rs. 1,000 crore.

Recommendation No. 6

Functioning of the ICAR and its Institutes

(A) Evaluation of research conducted by ICAR Institutes:

5.3 The Committee had recommended in 2001 and again in 2002 that an independent body of agricultural and scientific experts should be constituted to evaluate the worth of research conducted in ICAR Institutes. However, after a lot of dithering, the Department finally asked the National Productivity Council (NPC) to evaluate the worth of research conducted by ICAR vis-a-vis the expenditure incurred. The NPC team visited two ICAR Institutes in Karnal and submitted their proposal to the Department. After examination of

the proposals, the Department decided that NPC should come up with a revised module after discussing the matter threadbare with the concerned scientific experts. The NPC propose to complete the study within a period of 6 months.

The Committee fails to understand why despite the recommendation of the Committee to constitute an independent body of agricultural and scientific experts for evaluation of research conducted, the Department entrusted the job of NPC which specializes in operational analysis to increase productivity. An Evaluation Committee with eminent agricultural scientists should have been constituted demand entrusted with powers to establish Expert Committees for all the ICAR laboratories to evaluate their work in their specialized fields and to suggest reorientation for the research programmes in the light of the new scientific developments and requirements of Indian agriculture.

The Committee are disappointed to note that even after a lapse of more than two years, the work relating to the study is still in a nascent stage. The Committee, therefore, desire that an Evaluation consisting of eminent agricultural scientists should be constituted immediately to evaluate the worth of research conducted in the ICAR Institutes and submit its report within six months.

Reply of the Government

5.4 A Committee of eminent agricultural scientists has been constituted Report of the Committee shall be placed before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture as per their observations contained in 41st Report based on Demands for Grants 2003-04.

(B) Committee to Review the Administrative Structure of ICAR (Shri Hemendra Kumar Committee)

5.5 The Committee further note that the Department had constituted a Committee in August, 2002 to review the Administrative Structure of the ICAR at Headquarters and its Linkages with Institutions and SAUs. The Committee had since given its report, which was under examination by the Department.

The Committee feel that the appointment of a Review Committee for reorganization of ICAR, consisting predominantly of bureaucrats, could not serve the objectives of reorientation of research programmes of ICAR. The Committee would like to make the following observations regarding the recommendations of the Review Committee:

(i) The Committee find that the ICAR has been reviewed nine times during the past 27 years. Frequent reviews and restructuring on the basis of each review disturbs the functioning of a Scientific Organisation with a network of Institutions and Laboratories throughout the country. A scientific project, unlike an administrator or financial job, requires concentered efforts to build a nucleus of scientific workers over a period of time, keeping in view the aims and objectives of the project. From this point of view and considering the present ICAR set-up and its working so far, the Committee feel that the constitution of the Review Committee with predominance of bureaucrats was not called for.

(ii) If any reorganization was necessary, the Review Committee should have been headed by a senior Agricultural Scientist or a retired Justice of Supreme Court who

could objectively suggest administrative changes keeping in view the requirements of scientific research and development.

(iii) The recommended increase in the number of bureaucrats is unjustified as the performance of scientists who are engaged in their respective scientific activities, is to be judged from the quality of their scientific output by their Peers at the Headquarters.

(iv) The suggested composition of the Governing Body is seriously open to criticism. Renowned Scientists and Educationists should play a dominant role in the Governing Body of ICAR. However, the Review Committee in its wisdom has recommended that the number of Vice Chancellors and Directors in the Governing Body be reduced from six to four (para 2.4 of the Report) and representation of bureaucrats enhanced. This is contrary to the Government's avowed policy of debureaucratization of scientific departments.

(v) During early seventies, a deliberate decision was taken by the Government to establish a separate Department of Agricultural Research and Education under the Ministry of Agriculture manned by agricultural scientists and technical experts so that full impact of agricultural science and technology could be utilized for the advancement of agriculture. Therefore, bureaucratization of the only scientific Organisation under the Ministry of Agriculture, i.e. ICAR, will be a negation of the well established policy of the Government.

(vi) The Committee seriously objects to the recommendations of the Review Committee (para 6.2 of the Report) that its Report should straightway be put up to ICAR Society within a month and then to the Cabinet-thus bypassing the Governing Body of ICAR as well as the existing High Powered Policy Committee. The recommendation of

the Review Committee ignoring the well established practice of referring its Report to the organization which will be affected (like the governing Body of ICAR) and also avoiding reference of the Report to the High Powered Policy Committee of ICAR, violates the principle of natural justice.

The Committee desire that the Department may explain the above issues.

Reply of the Government

5.6 The recommendations/concerns of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Agriculture have been noted the recommendations of the Hemendra Kumar Committee Report are being examined accordingly.

Recommendation No. 7

Externally Aided Projects (EAPs)

(A) National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP)

5.7 The World Bank aided National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) would terminate in December, 2003 after completion of 5 years. Many diverse activities were being implemented under the project to improve the relevance of technology generation, refinement, assessment and transfer programmes to the changing needs of farmers and processors to address key national priorities of food security, economic growth, alleviation of rural poverty and the conservation of natural resources.

The Committee had noted that there have been a number of achievements under the three components of NATP, viz. Agro-ecosystem research, Innovation Technology Dissemination (ITD) and Organisation & Management (O&M). To further consolidate the gains of the Project, the Committee felt that either the present Project should continue beyond December, 2003, or a similar programme should be started.

The Committee, therefore, recommended that talks may be opened with the World Bank urgently to extend the NATP for a further period of 1-2 years. In case that was not feasible on favourable terms and conditions another similar Project/Programme, either independently or with foreign assistance/aid, may be started from January, 2004 so that the momentum gained during the NATP was not lost.

Reply of the Government

5.8 The talks opened with the World Bank regarding the extension and the second phase of the project during the visit of the Supervision Mission of the World Bank during 19 to May, 2003. A letter for the one year extension of the project has already been sent to Secretary, DEA. A concept note for the second phase is drafted and being finalised, which after approval of Planning Commission will be presented to the World Bank through DEA.

Comments of the Committee

5.9 For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.11 of Chapter I of this Report.

(B) Seabass Breeding and Cage Culture

5.10 The Committee note that during the first meeting of the Indo-French Working Group on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Food Industries held in November, 1994, Breeding and culture of sea bass was identified as one of the collaborative programmes.

The Committee are surprised to note that till date only earth filling work has been completed and infrastructure facilities for the project are yet to be established, necessitating extension of the project duration till June, 2003. The Committee deplore the

lackadaisical approach of the Department resulting in avoidable delay of the Project. According to the Committee, delay in project causes huge financial escalation as well as shows the DARE/ICAR in a very poor light in the eyes of the foreign collaborations.

The Committee recommend that the Project should be completed expeditiously and the Department should ensure that such delays do not occur in future as such delays discourage foreign assistance.

Reply of the Government

5.11 When the hatchery work was about to start, which had been entrusted to CPWD, a court case was filed in the High Court of Madras on 6th December, 2001 on the ground that the construction is in violation of Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) notification of February 1991. The High Court ordered in interim injunction restraining the activity. On persuasion by the institute that hatcheries are permitted in the zone, Department of Environment and Pollution Control Board, Government of Tamil Nadu had considered the matter and further after continuous pursuance, the District Coastal Zone Management Committee has cleared the proposal in April, 2003. This is being taken up with the State Committee and every effort is being made to get the interim injunction vacated. However, the issue is still sub-judice.

NEW DELHI
19 December, 2003
28 Agrahayana, 1925 (Saka)

S.S. PALANIMANICKAM
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Agriculture.

APPENDIX II

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE 41ST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (13TH LOK SABHA)

| | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| (i) | Total number of Recommendations | 10 |
| (ii) | Recommendations/Observations which have been Accepted by the Government | 5 |
| | Serial Nos. 4,5,8,9 & 10 | |
| | Total 5 | |
| | Percentage | 50 |
| (iii) | Recommendations/Observations which the Committee Do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies | |
| | Total | Nil |
| | Percentage | 0% |
| (iv) | Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies Of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee | |
| | Serial Nos. 1& 3 | |
| | Total 2 | |
| | Percentage | 20% |
| (v) | Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Final replies of the Government are still awaited | |
| | Serial No. 2, 6 & 7 | |
| | Total 3 | |
| | Percentage | 30% |