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Title : Need to take steps to protect the poultry industry affected due to spread of Bird Flu in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): Sir, in India landless labourers often comprises of more than 50% of their income from livestock especially from poultry. The value of output from poultry sector is nearly 15,000 crore and the sector provides direct and indirect employment to over 2 million people. With the output of 45 billion eggs in 2004-2005, India ranks among the top 6 egg producing countries in the world. Furthermore, poultry today is one of the fastest growing sectors in the economy. India is among the five top chicken meat-producing countries in the world. Around 1.65 metric tonne of chicken meat was produced in 2004. For poverty alleviation, nutritional nourishment and gender empowerment, Government is promoting the development of the poultry sector particularly of the rural backward areas. In view of the threat of Bird Flu throughout the country, the industry has collapsed. Government has taken various steps for prevention of the spread of the disease in the country. In Tamil Nadu, Coimabtoe, Erode and Namakkal districts are the main centres for poultry and hatcheries. Sir, due to this Bird Flu, the Poultry Industry in Tamil Nadu is also very badly affected and has financially collapsed.

To safeguard this industry, I request the Government to start an International standard research laboratory in Tamil Nadu either at Coimbatore or at Namakkal and furthermore, cold storage facilities should be provided to protect 8 to 10 crore eggs and an insurance scheme has to be introduced for the chicken. Moreover, those industrialists who have borrowed loan from the nationalised banks, the interest should be waived off and the loans must be converted into a long term loan and the industry must be protected.