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Title : Need to take steps for the revival and growth of pineapple industry in Kerala.

SHRI P.T. THOMAS (IDUKKI): Kerala produces 3.25 lakh tonnes of pineapple worth Rs. 325 crores approximately annually. More than 50 percent of total area under cultivation falls in my Parliamentary Constituency Idukki. About 60 thousand people get direct livelihood and more than one lakh people are indirectly associated with pineapple sector. For the betterment of this sector the interest rate on pineapple loan may be brought down to 6%. Presently, more than 3 lakh farmers pay much higher rate of interest. Farmers suffered heavy losses during last May-June. Therefore, one year moratorium on reimbursement of loans may be given. National Horticulture Board's norms for assistance may be amended so as to suit financial conditions of pineapple growers in Kerala. Further, Area limitation for State Horticultural Mission's assistance (4 hectare) may be removed since small areas are not economical. Financial support to the Pineapple Research Station of Kerala Agricultural University at Vazhakulam be considered. An agency for pineapple cultivation may be set up for co-ordinating production, processing and marketing of pineapple.