

is not functioning. As soon as the trunk sewer is completed by the MCD, these colonies will be allowed to join the peripheral sewerage system.

*[Translation]*

Use of cow-dung compost and green manure

3723. SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that water absorbing capacity of land is more when cow-dung compost and green manure is used instead of chemical fertilisers ;

(b) if so, whether farmers will be encouraged to use such manures through any research so that the use of chemical fertilizers in agricultural operations is reduced; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FERTILIZERS IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. PRABHU) : (a) Yes, Sir. Application of Organic Manure in the form of cow-dung compost and green manures increase the water absorbing capacity of land as compared to exclusive use of chemical fertilizers.

(b) and (c) Farmers are encouraged to adopt the integrated use of chemical fertilizers and organic manures to improve the soil fertility and supplement nutrient requirement of crops. In this regard State Governments are regularly asked to fix targets for production and utilization of organic manures. At present about 235 million tonnes of rural compost and 6.7 million tonnes of urban compost are being used as manure (1985-86).

*[English]*

Subsidy on seeds

3724. SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK :

SMT. MEIRA KUMAR :

SHRI SUBHASH YADAV :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether prices of improved seeds are almost two to three times more than the support price of foodgrains in the country ;

(b) whether there is any proposal to provide subsidy on seeds; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FERTILIZERS IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. PRABHU) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) It has been noticed that the cost of seeds as percentage of total cost of cultivation of most crops does not exceed 10%. For crops like jute and mustard, it is much less. The more important factors in case of seeds are their quality and timely availability. Production of high quality seeds involves high cost due to special care particularly plant protection, segregation of lighter seeds, chemical treatment etc. Since the yields from quality seeds are much higher than the yields from grain the additional income from extra production is enough to offset the slightly higher cost on the use of quality seeds.

As a matter of policy, therefore, the Government concentrates on the aspect of quality and timely availability of seeds rather than investing scarce resources in subsidising seeds.

For the above reasons, it is not desirable to subsidise all seed distribution in the country. However, in cases of particular crops where the availability of seeds at reasonable prices seems a constraint, subsidies are considered on a selective basis.