

the Agricultural Production Commissioners/Agriculture Secretaries or other senior State officials during meetings convened by the Ministry of Agriculture, or during visits of Central officials to the States. Advance estimates are also framed periodically by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics in the Ministry of Agriculture on the basis of preliminary estimates of area under different crops and available results of crop cutting surveys from different States. Experience has shown that the final figures given by some of the State Governments by about March-April for kharif crops and July-August for rabi crops are significantly lower than the advance estimates. Reductions in earlier estimates are reported from different States in different years. Such changes upset the assumptions made by Government for planning and policy formulation and are obviously undesirable.

It is not correct that certain States lowered their food output estimates by 2-3 million tonnes in December 1981. However, the advance estimates of foodgrains output for the 1980-81 crop had to be lowered because the final estimates received from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh were lower.

During the Inaugural Address at the Annual Conference of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development, Irrigation & Civil Supplies drew pointed attention, inter-alia, to this problem of variations and asked if the agricultural statisticians could help the Government in devising techniques for cross-checking the advance estimates of production. This problem has been considered subsequently in the Ministry of Agriculture also and a Committee of Experts has been set up to examine the question of improving the quality and timeliness of estimates of crop production.

Price fixation by APC

1287. SHRI B. V. DESAI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering to modify the method adopted by Agricultural Price Commission for the cost of production of different farm products in order to make price fixation process more realistic ;

(b) if so, what are the main changes made ; and

(c) to what extent these changes have been welcomed by the farmers ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN) : (a) and (b). The Agricultural Prices Commission while recommending support/procurement price of agricultural commodities takes into account the cost of production of the respective commodities. The data for the estimation of such costs is, however, collected by the Directorate of Economics & Statistics in the Ministry of agriculture through implementing agencies which are mostly located in Agricultural Universities in the various States. Until 1980-81 crop season, the sampling design adopted for the estimation of cost of production was related to a single crop approach. In the selection of tehsils, villages and holdings for the collection of cost data the focus was placed on the single selected crop. From the crop year 1981-82 this procedure has been changed. On the basis of recommendations of the Special Expert Committee headed by Dr. S. R. Sen, crop complex approach has been adopted. Under this approach the cost data will be collected for all important crops simultaneously. The objective of the revised approach is to generate cost of production estimates of all important crops

in the country. This procedure would also enable the Government to prepare cost estimates for various crops both at the State level and national level. It is expected that new approach would result in strengthening the basis for fixation of procurement/support prices.

(c) The new approach has been just introduced during the current year. It is reasonable to expect that the improvements in the methodology for strengthening the basis for determination of cost of production estimates would be welcomed by the farmers.

Scheme to Strengthen Integrated Rural Development Programme in States

1289. SHRI B.V. DESAI : Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Centre wants the States to strengthen the development of the machinery at the district level and below with a view to make the Block Development Officer responsible for the execution of the integrated rural development programme;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that Government of India has offered the State Governments 50 per cent of the additional expenditure incurred on the strengthening and reorganisation of the extension machinery at the block level;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Union Ministry insists that in addition to the BDO each NES Block should have a team of at least 8 Extension Officers; and

(d) if so, what are the other guidelines issued by the Centre in this regard and how many States have accepted this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI BALESHWAR RAM):
(a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d). It has been advised that against the 8 Extension Officers envisaged under the earlier schematic budget, atleast 3 posts of Extension Officer, Credit, Industries and Women Programme should be there. Following are the conditions under the scheme:

- (i) The block level set up should ordinarily provide for 10 village Level Workers a complement of Extension Officers atleast for Credit, Industries, Women's programme and a progress Assistant as was envisaged in the original schematic budget. The gap in the present strength will be judged with reference to this norm.
- (ii) The additional requirement of staff at the block level will be assessed in respect of each State individually.
- (iii) The State Government should be prepared to meet 50% of the cost of additional staff.
- (iv) Only the minimum additional staff required for efficient implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme will be considered after taking into account the staff already sanctioned under the various other developmental schemes including tribal programmes, special component plans, special livestock programme, etc. at the block level and the village level.
- (v) The additional staff may be phased over 2-3 years.