

Spread of *Phalaris Minor*

5750. SHRI L. S. TUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the outbreak and spread of *Phalaris Minor* (Gulli Danda) which has affected about 25 per cent of wheat fields in Punjab;

(b) whether the ICAR have looked into this serious problem and developed any remedies and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government will ensure adequate and timely import and supply of Weedicides to control this disease and making these available to the farmers at reasonable prices and abolish imposition of Customs duty on these weedicides; and

(d) whether Government will direct the ICAR to speedily taken up remedial work in order to ensure that this indifference does not necessitate imports of wheat which is already affected seriously by Karnal Bunt for past 20 years due to failure of ICAR?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Government of India is aware of the incidence of *Phalaris Minor* in wheat crop. A survey on weed flora carried out in Punjab has shown that the major weeds associated with wheat crop are *Phalaris Minor* and wild oats. It has also been estimated that about 25 per cent of the cropped area in Punjab has been affected by these two weeds.

(b) Indian Council of Agricultural Research is implementing an All India Coordinated Research Project on Weed Control since 1978 which is in operation at 13 centres located in different parts of the country. One of its centre is located at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. The field studies have indicated that higher seed rate induced and appreciable smothering affect on *Phalaris Minor*. The Scientists in the All India Coordinated Wheat Improvement Project of the ICAR con-

ducted extensive experiments on control of *Phalaris Minor* and wild oats and have been making recommendations to control these weeds for the last 7 years. The weedicides like Tribunil, Dosanox, Tolkan, Gramminon, Areolon have been found effective in controlling this weed.

(c) Arrangements were made from time to time by the Government to import the weedicides required for control of these weeds and the same were supplied to the concerned states in time.

The cost of these weedicides to the extent of 25 per cent is subsidized and this subsidy is provided on 50:50 basis by the Government of India and the concerned State Governments.

(d) As already stated in (b) above research studies for evolving suitable weed control practices were vigorously pursued by the ICAR at the agricultural universities as result of which only control measures as of today were recommended. The chemicals recommended by the ICAR are very effective in controlling the *Phalaris Minor* and wild oats.

As regards Karnal Bunt of wheat, this disease has not been serious for the past 20 years. Though recorded for the first time in 1931 in Karnal, it remained of minor importance until 1968-69, appearing sporadically in isolated plots. However, since 1975 its incidence began to increase, particularly in the north-western region. Through research work, it has been established that the disease is seed-borne, soil-borne and also air-borne. Hence satisfactory chemical or cultural control is not possible. The only and best solution as present is to tackle the disease by employing tolerant or resistant wheat varieties which need time. The scientists have already indentified and recommended some varieties which have shown very low incidence of the disease under field conditions. Research has been intensified to develop better techniques for screening of varieties for durable resistance. Monitoring and surveillance on incidence of the disease is being continued vigorously.