

**Progress made by ICAR regarding
Coconut Wilt Diseases**

5800. SHRI L. S. TUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to the reply given to U.S. Q. No. 928 on 24th November, 1980 regarding research on Palm Diseases in Kerala and state:

(a) the progress made by the ICAR institutes in respect of coconut wilt disease;

(b) whether in view of the failure of ICAR to find remedies to this disease for over 20 years, Government propose to order an inquiry in the matter and take remedial steps to bring about accountability in ICAR;

(c) whether the failure of the ICAR Institute in this respect has been brought out in the 5-yearly achievement audit committee report, the ICAR Governing Body, the concerned Institute Management Committee or the Regional Committee meetings and if so, the full details thereof; and

(d) whether Government will reorganise the evaluation and monitoring system of ICAR and also put an outstanding Scientists to lead it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) The Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is fully seized of the Coconut-root wilt problem and has been vigorously pursuing its research on this complex disease. The strategy evolved by this institute to contain this disease consists of the following features—

(i) containing the disease by preventing its further spread;

(ii) promoting better management of diseased palms by judicious manuring, irrigation, inter-cropping and mixed farming;

(iii) Identification of varieties resistant to the disease.

Twenty four coconut cultivars from six Pacific Ocean countries have been collected during August-October, 1981 and their seedlings have been raised for screening against the disease to locate resistance/tolerance. Besides the above, several seedlings raised from high yielding disease-free 'Super' palms have been planted in diseased gardens to study their reaction and capacity to withstand the disease. In an experiment where hybrids derived from the cross involving Chowghat Dwarf Orange and West Coast Tall and the West Coast Tall palms themselves were compared, the disease incidence was only 6.5 per cent in case of the hybrids and 35.5 per cent in the West Coast Tall. The yield in the hybrids was 118 nuts/palm as compared to 50 nuts/palm in the case of West Coast Tall. The Central Plantation Crops Research Institute also took up an eradication programme north of Chalakudy river and 400 diseased palm were removed.

(b) The coconut root wilt disease is a very complex malady and the work done so far has helped in understanding various aspects of the disease problem. A number of possible factors which may be causing the disease such as different fungi, bacteria, nematodes, soil factors and virus have been investigated upon. The work now in progress is directed at pinpointing the actual causal organism or factor. Since coconut is a perennial crop it takes time to come to valid conclusions, unlike in the case of annual crops. Coconut elsewhere also suffer from such diseases like cadang-cadang, Jamaican yellow, Thatipaka, Thanjavour wilt etc., for which the actual causal organism is not yet known inspite of concerted efforts. Government has no proposal to order any enquiry since ICAR Scientists are giving their best to the nation and they are fully accountable for the tasks assigned to them. However, research is an activity where it is difficult to lay down limits to find solutions to intractable problems.

The ICAR has appointed a Quinquennial Review Team in October,

1980 for examining the research work in progress in depth and to give recommendations to strengthen the programme further. The recommendations of the Quinquennial Review Team are awaited and would be carefully considered when received in the ICAR.

(c) Neither the Regional Committee No. 8 which covers Kerala, nor the Institute Management Committee nor the Governing Body of ICAR have so far made any adverse observations on the working of the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute vis-a-vis its programme of research on coconut root wilt. As the Regional Committee Meeting No. 8 held on 21-8-1980 there was a request from a member about the urgent need to lay stress no more scientific research on the root wilt disease.

The Governing Body at its meeting held on 30-12-1980 also considered a "Status Report on the Coconut Root 'Wilt' Disease". The important aspects of this report were highlighted in the Governing Body Meeting by the Director, CPCRI. There was no adverse comment by the Governing Body on the programme of research on this disease.

The Quinquennial Review Team for the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute has not yet completed its task and the report is awaited. The report when received, would be discussed by the Institute Management Committee and the Governing Body of the ICAR.

(d) The ICAR has already established and streamlined an evaluation and monitoring system through its Regional Committees, General Body, Governing Body, and the Institute's Management Committees and Research Councils, besides the Quinquennial Review Teams consisting of eminent Scientists.

An outstanding internationally known Scientist is already leading the ICAR.

News "Natural Resources of Darjeeling and their Conservation and Utilization"

5801. SHRI A. K. ROY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the article in Science and Culture (September, 1981 vol. 47, under the title "Natural Resources of Darjeeling Districts and their conservation and utilisation" giving various suggestions to maintain ecological balance and develop the Himalayan region;

(b) if so, facts in details and reaction thereto;

(c) whether he has taken a special note of the suggestion that the trees above 4000 ft. should not be felled without proper replacement on any account; and

(d) if so, steps taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) All these matters are being looked into by Government at various levels.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The matter has been brought to the notice of the State Government.

Operation Barga

5802. SHRI MUKUNDA MANDAL: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that 'operation Barga' in West Bengal aimed at prompt recording of Bargadars;

(b) if so, facts thereof;

(c) how many Bargadars have recorded their Barga right since inception of the operation;