

23,245 villages in Rajasthan have been affected by drought during the pre-monsoon period of this year. During the year 1981, 17,250 villages were affected by post monsoon drought in West Bengal. These villages are still under drought conditions and relief operations are continuing.

(c) *Rajasthan*: On the basis of the report of the Central Team which visited Rajasthan from 4th to 7th May, 1982 and the recommendations of the High Level Committee on Relief thereon the Government of India have sanctioned a ceiling of expenditure of Rs. 3703.39 lakhs for various drought relief measures upto September 1982.

West Bengal: The request of the Government of West Bengal for Central assistance is under consideration.

Import of Wheat

555. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN. Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of India are considering to import more wheat this year to meet the country's demand; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (KUMARI KAMLA KUMARI): (a) At present there is no proposal with the Government to import wheat.

(b) Does not arise.

Acceptance of Damaged Wheat

556. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR YADAV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to Punjab Agricultural University experts around 16 lakh tonnes of wheat this year had been either sprouted, shattered or become lustreless or discoloured;

(b) if so, the details;

(c) whether the Punjab Government decided to buy all the rain and

hail damaged wheat at the minimum support price of Rs. 142/-;

(d) if so, the details and total quantity so far purchased;

(e) whether the newly procured damaged and moisture carrying wheat has been/or is being sent to deficit States on priority basis for distribution through fair price shops; and

(f) if so, the details?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (KUMARI KAMLA KUMARI): (a) and (b). The assessment of damage to wheat in Punjab due to unseasonal rains in April-May, 1982 has been made by the Punjab Agricultural University as well as by the Agriculture Department, Government of India in consultation with the Punjab Agriculture Department. The loss of wheat is estimated between 6 to 7 lakh tonnes. Apart from the quantitative loss due to shattering, germination and absorption of moisture, a part of wheat lying in the field suffered qualitative damage to various extent in the form of loss in colour and lustre.

(c) and (d). The purchase of wheat under price support operations is made in accordance with uniform specifications prescribed by the Government of India. In order to safeguard the interests of the producers, Government have relaxed the uniform specifications of wheat to be procured for the Central Pool:

(i) Lustre-lost wheat with no damage to Kernel has been allowed to be procured.

(ii) The limit of slightly damaged grains, viz., grains with kernels damaged superficially, without the quality of the material being affected has been raised in Grade-2 from 10 per cent to 20 per cent, without any penal cut in the procurement price; and