

apple, papaya, kinnow and guava. This project is very important for promotion of export of fruits.

4. Promotion of Export of Fresh Mangoes

A project has been undertaken by APEDA in collaboration with Exporters and CFTRI for post-harvest treatment of mangoes and transportation of mangoes in Controlled Atmosphere Containers by ship for export to premium markets like Europe. This experiment has been largely successful in increasing the shelf-life of fresh mangoes.

5. Promotion of Mushrooms, Gherkins and Passion Fruit

The Ministry has supported projects of processing of mushrooms and gherkins on a large scale primarily for exports. Recently, the Ministry has also supported a project for processing of passion fruit into concentrates in Mizoram. Passion fruit juice commands a very high price in international markets.

6. Quality Upgradation

Consequent to the signing of the Agreement on Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary Measures under WTO regime, international quality standards have become very crucial for exports. The Ministry is playing a pro-active role in establishment of quality control and analytical laboratories, introduction of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and ISO 9000, setting up of a Codex Laboratory in CFTRI, Mysore and active participation in the activities of Codex Alimentarius Commission for setting of standards. These activities will upgrade the quality of our food products/including processed fruits and vegetables, and make them viable and competitive in both domestic and international markets.

Cotton Research Centre

6199. DR. SAROJA V. : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have a proposal to open a Cotton Research Centre in the country during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the funds provided by the Government for the purpose; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to increase the production of cotton in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Question does not arise.

(d) The following steps have been taken to increase the production of cotton in the country:-

1. High yielding and pest tolerant varieties/hybrids have been developed for different agro-ecological regions of the country.
2. Improved and economically viable production and protection technologies have been developed.
3. Front-line demonstrations are being conducted to bridge the productivity barriers.
4. Cost effective integrated pest management schedules have been developed to different cotton growing states of the country.
5. The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Intensive Cotton Development Programme in major cotton growing States. Assistance is being given for transfer of technology through field demonstrations, farmers training and supply of critical inputs like seed, plant protection equipments and sprinklers etc. Besides this, a Cotton Technology Mission is also being contemplated by Govt. of India in the 9th plan.

CPCRI

6200. SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Central Plantation Crop Research Institute (CPCRI) at Kasargod in Kerala has made any indepth study on the rootwilt disease in coconut trees;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the findings thereof;

(c) whether any remedy has been found out by the scientists to root out this disease; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Details of findings are given in the attached statement.

(c) and (d) The breakthrough to root out this disease has not been found out. However, to control this disease, following measures are suggested:

In the severely infected gardens, eradication of coconut palms is recommended. In the moderately infected gardens, management practices like balanced nutrition and prophylactic sprays of pesticides is advocated. Breeding programmes are also underway to develop tolerant lines for which field resistant parents have been identified from the disease prone hot spot areas.

Statement

The root (wilt) disease of coconut is non-lethal, but debilitating, characterized by the abnormal bending or ribbing