

Demand and Supply of Potatoes and Onions

*156. SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of demand and supply of potatoes and onions during each of the last three years;

(b) the minimum storage limit prescribed for these items and its storage capacity in the country at present;

(c) the details of the quantity of potato and onion that got rotten last year;

(d) the action taken by the Government to enhance the storage capacity so as to prevent the perishing of such items in future;

(e) whether the Government propose to announce the minimum support price of potatoes and onions for the benefit of the farmers; and

(f) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The Department has not made any assessment on demand and supply of potato and onion separately. However, the requirement of vegetables was estimated to be 131 million tonnes by the end of 9th Plan which includes potato and onion also. The production of potato and onion for the last three years is as under:

(Production in lakh tonnes)

Commodity	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98 (Advance estimates)
Potato	188.40	250.70	192.00
Onion	40.08	44.30	36.85

(b) There is no limit prescribed for the storage of these commodities. The total capacity available of the cold storage is about 105.55 lakh tonnes.

(c) The quantity of potatoes and onions rotted during the last year is not available. However, according to NAFED, 8-10% of these commodities get damaged during handling, storage and transportation.

(d) The Government has taken the following steps:

- (i) The Government of India has repealed the cold storage order enabling setting of cold storage without any licence.
- (ii) The National Horticulture Board is providing concessional loan assistance upto Rs. 35 lakhs at 4% service charge only.
- (iii) National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) is providing financial assistance in cooperative sector.

(iv) Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development Authority (APEDA) is also providing financial support at ports for export.

(e) and (f) The Government is implementing a Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) under which specific request of concerned State Government is considered for procurement of predetermined quantity of produce at an agreed price for a specific period in order to arrest downward trend of price and protect the farmers from any distress sale of their produce. The losses, if any, are shared on 50:50 basis between Central and State Governments. The NAFED is the Central Nodal Agency for procurement under MIS.

Foodgrains

*157. SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK:

SHRI ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether an estimated quantity of 23.5 crore tonnes of foodgrains is required for the country's population by 2000;

(b) if so, whether the Government are formulating any concrete plan to meet this demand;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the estimated foodgrains produced in the country at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) As per the report of the Working Group on 'Demand & Supply Projection of Agricultural Commodities and Improvement of Agricultural Statistics for the formulation of Ninth Five Year Plan', the demand for foodgrains in 2001-02 is placed at 194.50 million tonnes adopting the normative approach. However, as per the behaviouristic approach, the requirement is estimated to be 214.25 million tonnes assuming a growth rate of 6% of gross domestic products (GDP) and 216.50 million tonnes assuming a growth rate of 7% of GDP.

(b) and (c) In order to increase the production and productivity of various foodgrains the Government is implementing centrally sponsored Integrated Cereal Development Programmes in Rice/Wheat/Coarse Cereals Based Cropping Systems areas, Accelerated Maize Development Programme and the Pulses Development Project. Under these programmes/schemes incentives are provided to farmers for use of high yielding varieties of seeds, application of integrated pest management, propagation of scientific water management including micro irrigation, improved farm implements. Besides, field demonstration on farmers holdings including training of farmers and farm labourers are organised for effective transfer of technology. Government is also providing price and market support to the farmers by announcing the minimum support prices for major foodgrains crops and making arrangements for the procurement through the nodal agencies. The subsidised supply of fertilisers encourages its consumption for maintaining growth of foodgrains production. Further, as per the National Agenda