

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1207
ANSWERED ON:27.11.2000
WTO IMPACT ON IMPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have taken action to protect the interests of agricultural sector and farmers from the cheaper import from abroad under the provisions of WTO after signing it;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government propose to constitute a Joint Committee having representation of all the departments concerning agriculture based products;
- (d) whether the Government are increasing export subsidy and especially increasing the number of cold-storages in the country to boost agriculture export; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD Y. NAIK)

(a)&(b): With a view to protecting the interest of the agricultural sector and farmers from cheaper imports into the country, the tariff levels have been bound by India for primary agricultural products, processed agricultural products and edible oils, with a few exceptions, at 100%, 150% and 300% respectively. Therefore, import of agricultural commodities into India can be suitably regulated by imposing appropriate tariffs within the bound levels for protecting the interest of the farmers. Government has been using import tariff as an instrument to discourage imports wherever necessary and to protect the interest of the farmers. Government has in the recent past increased the basic import tariffs on a number of agricultural items as under:

S.No.	Item	Basic Customs Duty (in % age)
1.	Wheat	50
2.	Maize (corn) Seed	50
3.	Rice in Husk	80
4.	Husked (Brown) Rice	80
5.	Semi-milled or wholly Milled Rice whether or not polished or glazed.	70
6.	Broken Rice	80
7.	Grain Sorghum	50
8.	Millet	50
9.	Sugar	60 (in addition to a countervailing duty of Rs.850/- per tonne)
10.	Soyabean Oil, refined	45
11.	RBD Palmolein, refined	65
12.	Palm oil, refined	65
13.	Groundnut oil, refined	45

(c): The various issues concerning WTO Agreement on Agriculture were discussed at length with representatives of various Political Parties, voluntary organisations, farmers' organisations, State Ministers for Agriculture and Food to obtain their views for finalising the country's proposals for the negotiations in the WTO. There is already in existence an International Trade Advisory Body in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as WTO Coordinating Group of Secretaries, which regularly takes stock of all significant developments relating to WTO Agreements.

(d)&(e): No export subsidy is being given by the Government. A scheme of capital investment subsidy for construction/expansion/modernisation of cold storage/storages for horticulture produce is already under implementation. The Department of Commerce, through the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, (APEDA), has established Integrated Cold Storage and Cargo Handling Facilities at the major international Airports viz., IGI Airport, New Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Thiruvananthapuram in order to boost exports of perishable agricultural products.