

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:264
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2000
AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS
KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU;M. JAGANNATH

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the agricultural exports have shrunk during the last two years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government have taken any steps for quality upgradation to ensure fungus and bacterial free agricultural products to avoid rejection abroad;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to boost the agricultural exports to help the agricultural sector and to increase the employment and opportunities in the food processing and other related industries?

Answer

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN)

(a) & (b): International trade in agricultural commodities is dependent on prevailing international demand coinciding with domestic ability to supply, prevailing world prices of commodities, the varieties being traded and consumer preferences. The value of agro items exported, excluding marine products, tea, coffee, rubber, castor oil and cotton during the last two years is as below:

1997-98	Rs.15169	April-Oct.	Rs.7457.58
crores	1997-98		crores

1998-99	Rs.15960	April-Oct.	Rs.8712.62
crores	1998-99		crores

April-	Rs.7702.78
Oct,1999-2000	crores

Source : DGCI&S, Calcutta.

(c) & (d) As a measure to ensure fungus & bacterial free agricultural products to prevent rejection abroad, schemes have been developed for compulsory inspection and testing groundnuts for aflatoxin. The sampling & testing methodologies and the nomination of laboratories found capable to carry out checks and certify with reliability has been completed. Assistance is being extended to improve drying of agricultural products so as to ensure an environment that discourages development of fungus and bacteria in the product.

(e) The steps taken for enhancement of export of agricultural and processed food products including quality upgradation, augmenting employment opportunities in the food processing/agro industries inter alia include:

(i) Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation of technical know how of farmers through demonstration, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables, improving productivity and training of farmers.

(ii) Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging and strengthening of quality control including adoption of quality systems such as ISO 9000/HACCP at export units;

(iii) Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for eliminating pest incubation in the product especially mangoes for gaining access to overseas markets.

(iv) Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits, vegetables & floriculture products;

(v) Providing assistance for setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality, lack of contamination & ensuring freedom from bacteria & fungi;

(vi) Provision of soft loans for setting up of sheds grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment;

(vii) Providing financial assistance to exporter/growers/Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transport units, establishment of pre-cooling/cold storage facilities, integrated post-harvest handling systems(Pack Houses);

(viii) Grant of air freight subsidy for export of selected fresh vegetables and fresh fruits and floricultural products;

(ix) Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions;

(x) Providing assistance in development of data base and dissemination of market information.