

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2856
ANSWERED ON:12.12.2005
INDIAN FARMERS IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION
Khairi Shri Chandrakant Bhaurao

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to implement an action plan to enable Indian farmers to face international competition;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the steps to improve the productivity of items like maize, sorghum, soyabean, pulses, coconut, clove and spices;
- (c) whether the Government is planning to phase-out the schedule for lifting import curbs on farm goods; and
- (d) if so, the details of safeguard provisions for the same?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH)

(a)&(b): The Government has taken a number of steps to improve the productivity and competitiveness of agriculture in general and of items such as maize, sorghum, soybean, pulses, coconut, cloves and spices, in particular. In 2005, the Government has launched the National Horticulture Mission to improve the productivity and competitiveness of horticulture crops including coconut, cloves and spices. The Government is also implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, 'Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm and Maize (ISOPOM)' from 1.4.2004 for increasing production and productivity of oilseeds including soybean and maize. Another scheme, namely, Integrated Crop Development Programme – Coarse Cereals is being implemented as part of the Macro Management of the Agriculture Scheme to improve the production and productivity of coarse cereals including sorghum.

(c)&(d): As part of our international obligations, all quantitative restrictions including those on agricultural items, maintained by India on account of balance of payment reasons, were removed w.e.f. 1.4.2001. However, in order to ensure that the farmers of the country are not put to any hardship, the Govt. has put in place a suitable mechanism for monitoring the import of sensitive items and provides protection to the domestic products by resorting to various WTO compatible measures which include appropriate calibration of applied tariffs within the bound levels and safeguard action under certain specified circumstances. As a sequel to these measures, import duties on a number of items including edible oils, tea, coffee, copra, coconut, wheat, rice, maize, pulses, spices, arecanut, apple and cut flowers have been increased in the last five years.