

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
AGRICULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2620

ANSWERED ON:16.08.2004

USE OF ENDOSULFAN BY CASHEWNUT PLANTATION AUTHORITIES

Karunakaran Shri P.

**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) Whether the Government has recently noticed any serious health problems in the local inhabitants due to the unrestricted use of Endosulfan by the cashewnut plantation authorities in Kasaragod district of Kerala;
- (b) If so, whether the Government has appointed any investigating agency to look into the matter; and
- (c) If so, the details and outcome thereof alongwith the action taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) to (c): The National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) has reported higher prevalence of unusual diseases like mental retardation, congenital defects and abnormalities of re-productive system in children in the affected villages of Kasargod district of Kerala. However, the Expert Group constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. O.P. Dubey, Assistant Director General (Plant Protection), Indian Council of Agricultural Research, to assess the safety of Endosulfan has observed that there is no link established between use of Endosulfan in Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) plantations and health problems reported in Padre village. Another Committee of Experts constituted by the Government of Kerala under the Chairmanship of Dr. P.K. Sivaraman, Additional Director of Health Services, Kerala has stated that it could not find any reason other than Endosulfan spraying to explain the reported health hazards. In view of the lack of consensus amongst various experts on this issue which may have serious implications on public health, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has decided to revisit the issues pertaining to the safety of Endosulfan. The Government of Kerala has also been requested to conduct a detailed health and epidemiological study to ascertain and pinpoint the factors leading to the unusually high incidence of diseases in the cashew plantation areas of Kerala. The result of this study would form the basis of any decision regarding the future use of Endosulfan. The Government of Kerala has, in the meantime, prohibited the aerial spraying of Endosulfan for all crops in Kerala and decided that Peria Division of Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) would observe a pesticide holiday for a period of five years, PCK will undertake only ground based spraying of pesticides in their cashew plantation and all spraying operation of PCK in its cashew plantation will be carried out under the direct technical supervision of a joint Kerala Agricultural University and PCK Expert Group. The Kerala High Court has also passed an interim order to the effect that: 'Pending further decision by the Central Government in the light of the advice tendered to it by the Expert Committee appointed to consider the hazards of Endosulfan, the use of Endosulfan, or any of its formulation under any of the trade names, shall not be permitted within the State until further orders with liberty to parties to move for modification of this order in the light of the report of Expert Committee and the decision taken by the Central Government in the matter'.