

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:828

ANSWERED ON:27.11.2006

ARTIFICIAL RIPENING OF FRUITS

Ahir Shri Hansraj Gangaram;Khandelwal Shri Vijay Kumar

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether banned chemicals and calcium carbide powder are being used for artificial ripening of fruits before the scheduled time;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) its adverse impact on the health of human beings;
- (d) whether the fruits exported from India are being sent back from the foreign countries as a result thereof;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

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

(a)to(c): The Government is aware that the use of calcium carbide powder and gas for artificial ripening of fruits is harmful to health causing damage to skin and several ailments. Under PFA Rules, 1955, use of calcium carbide gas for ripening of fruits is prohibited.

(d)&(e): No report has been received on rejection of Indian fruits on account of use of calcium carbide.

(f): The PFA Act, 1954 and PFA Rules, 1955 are implemented by the State/UT Governments, who takes samples of food items and take action under the provisions of the PFA Act, in cases the samples are found not confirming to the standard or there is a violation of a rules. The State Governments are advised from time to time to keep vigil for checking food adulteration. To check the hazard of calcium carbide, an alternative method for ripening of fruits have been developed by ICAR. The fruits are exposed to ethylene gas at a concentration of 10 to 100 ppm (0.001 to 0.01%) in airtight rooms for 24 hrs at 20-25° C and 90-95 per cent RH. The fruits may also be treated with ethrel/ethephon in hot water at 52±2° C for 5 minutes having a concentration of 100-500 ppm depending upon maturity and variety.