

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:72

ANSWERED ON:25.02.2011

ARTIFICIAL RIPENING GROWTH OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Singh Alias Pappu Singh Shri Uday;Singh Shri Uday Pratap

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether usage of health hazardous chemicals/hormones such as calcium carbide and oxytocin for early ripening/growth of fruits, vegetables and milk production has been reported in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of such cases detected and the action taken against the guilty during the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise;
- (c) whether any study has recently been conducted to ascertain the adverse affects of such chemicals on human health;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the corrective measures taken/proposed by the Government to ensure strict vigil to check the use of such chemical agents and compliance of laws in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DINESH TRVEDI)

(a)to(e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 72 FOR 25TH FEBRUARY, 2011

There have been reports in Media that some hazardous chemicals are being used for early ripening and increasing the size and weight of fruits and vegetables and milk production. Rule 44 AA of the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Rules, 1955, prohibits the sale of fruits which have been artificially ripened by use of acetylene gas commonly known as carbide gas produced from Calcium Carbide.

There is no provision of use of ripening hormones under Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules,1955.However, the Ministry of Agriculture has recommended use of ethylene gas in low concentration exogenously to trigger ripening of fruits.

Implementation of PFA Act and Rules rests with State /U.T. Governments. The Commissioner Food Safety/Food (Health) Authority of States / UTs who are responsible for implementation of PFA Act, 1954, and PFA Rules, 1955, in their State / UTs. have been requested to keep a strict vigil on use of carbide gas and other hazardous chemicals for ripening of fruits and take legal action for violation of the provision of the Act/ Rules. The State Governments have also been advised to educate the public through mass / electronic media against consumption of such artificially ripened fruits. The details of cases, persons booked / convicted in the states specially for artificially ripening and increasing the size and weight of fruits and vegetables and increasing milk production by use of calcium carbide and oxytocin are not maintained centrally.

However, as per the information provided by Government of Uttar Pradesh, 35 FIRs have been filed and 39 persons in 17 districts have been arrested for use of hazardous chemicals for artificial ripening of fruits in 2010.

The Ministry has not conducted any study to ascertain the adverse effects of such chemicals on human health. However, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has constituted a Core Committee under Co Chairmanship of DG, ICMR and DG ICAR to evolve a strategy to tackle this issue on a long term basis and identify researchable issues pertaining to detection of the agents.