

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3311

ANSWERED ON:23.08.2011

USE OF OXYTOCIN IN VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the vegetables and seasonal fruits are being ripened artificially by oxytocin, ethylene gas and other toxic drugs;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith its impact on human health;
- (c) whether it is resulting in the increase in cancer like fatal diseases in the country;
- (d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (e) the number of persons against whom action has been taken in this regard during the last three years and the current year?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI HARISH RAWAT)

(a) to (c): There have been reports in media about use of toxic substances like calcium carbide and oxytocin for early ripening of fruits and vegetables.

Clause 2.3.5 of Chapter 2 of Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on sale) Regulations, prohibits sale of fruits which have been artificially ripened by use of acetylene gas commonly known as carbide gas produced from calcium carbide.

However, use of ethylene gas in low concentration exogenously to trigger ripening of fruits is considered safe.

(d) & (e): Implementation of Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006 and its Rules/Regulations rests with State/UT Governments. The Commissioners of Food Safety/Food (Health) Authority of States/UTs who are responsible for implementation of the Act 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 Act/Rules. The State Governments have also been advised to educate the public through mass electronic media against consumption of such artificial ripened fruits. The details of cases, persons booked/convicted are not maintained by Central Government.