

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1327
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2011
IMPACT OF PRODUCTION OF PALM OIL
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether as per the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) the production of palm oil is directly linked to deforestation, loss of habitat for endangered species and an increase in green house gas emission;
- (b) if so, whether the Government is contemplating to find a substitute for the said oil; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a): In one of a series explaining World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) position on key issues impacting the world's forests, the "WWF Position Paper on Oil Palm, April, 2008" has expressed concern that the growing demand for palm oil could create incentives for oil palm plantations to expand into areas with high conservation values, impose environmental and social costs due to indiscriminate forest clearing and, also threaten freshwater ecosystems, livelihoods of forest dependant peoples, the habitats of endangered species such as elephants, rhinos, tigers and orang-utans and the success of climate change mitigation on the global level.

It further refers to a report published in 2007 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) which acknowledges that palm oil plantations are now the leading cause of rainforest destruction in Malaysia and Indonesia. In the paper the WWF called upon industry, regulators, buyers and other stake holders to work collectively to develop and promote the adoption of environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable practices in the oil palm industry.

(b) & (c): Oil Palm is generally grown in agro-climatic conditions with higher rainfall, high humidity and long sunshine hours. In India, oil palm is grown in irrigated conditions on agricultural lands. As oil palm is the highest oil yielding perennial crop and also, one of the cheapest source of edible oil, its cultivation in India assumes significance for augmenting the indigenous availability of edible oil, particularly in view of the fact that India is a net importer of edible oils.

Under centrally sponsored scheme " Integrated Scheme on Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm and Maize" (ISOPOM), a component on oilpalm development is being implemented in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Goa, Orissa, Kerala, Mizoram and Maharashtra. As the Oil Palm Development Programme under ISOPOM is being implemented by the State Government, it is ensured that the oilpalm cultivation practices are environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable.