

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4308

ANSWERED ON:20.12.2011

REDUCING AREA UNDER CULTIVATION

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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the area under cultivation is reducing rapidly leading to potential agrarian crisis;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto alongwith the details of the total cultivated area in the country from 1999-2011;
- (c) whether reduction in cultivable land is attributable to diversion of land for commercial and other non-agricultural purposes;
- (d) if so, the details of agricultural land converted for commercial and other non agricultural purposes during the above period; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to prevent the conversion of agricultural land for commercial usage?

Answer

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

(a) to (d): On account of shift in area for non-agricultural purposes(which includes all land occupied by buildings, roads, railways, under water and land put to uses other than agriculture) the agricultural/cultivable land in the country has marginally declined during the last five years. As compared to 183186 thousand hectares during 2003-04, the agricultural land in the country has come down to 182385 thousand hectares during 2008-09.

However, as a result of various initiatives taken by the Government to enhance production and productivity in the agriculture sector, the production of foodgrains has increased considerably and marginal decline in the agricultural/cultivable land is not likely to have any adverse impact on the agricultural production. Further, to increase the agricultural land area in the country and for maintaining balance in different types of uses, the Government is implementing various Programmes/Schemes, such as, (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPR), (ii) Soil Conservation in the Catchments of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone Rivers (RVP & FPR), (iii) Reclamation & Development of Alkali and Acid Soils (RADAS) and (iv) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA).

The details of agricultural land (cultivable land), the cultivated land and area under non-agriculture uses in the country as per the latest Land Use Statistics 2008-09 are given in the table below:

(area in thousand hectares)

Year	Agricultural Land Cultivated (Cultivable Land)	Land	Area under non- agriculture uses
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1999-00	183873	156116	23598
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2000-01	183506	156142	23889
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2001-02	183607	156079	24049
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2002-03	183172	154322	24263
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2003-04	183186	155228	24651
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2004-05	183007	155649	24890
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2005-06	182742	155526	25122
2006-07	182565	155424	25568
2007-08	182505	155663	26017
2008-09	182385	155905	26308

(e): With a view to prevent conversion of agricultural land for non agricultural purposes, Government of India has taken several steps, viz. National Policy for Farmers 2007 (NPF 2007): National Policy for Farmers, 2007 has recommended that ``Prime farmland must be conserved for agriculture except under exceptional circumstances, provided that the agencies that are provided with agricultural land for non-agricultural projects should compensate for treatment and full development of equivalent degraded/wastelands elsewhere. For non- agricultural purposes, as far as possible, land with low biological potential for farming would be earmarked and allocated.`` State Governments have been advised to earmark lands with low biological potential such as uncultivable land, land affected by salinity, acidity, etc., for non-agricultural development activities, including industrial and construction activities. National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 (NRRP, 2007): National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 formulated by Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources has recommended that as far as possible, projects may be set up on wastelands, degraded land or unirrigated land. Acquisition of agricultural land for non agricultural use in project may be kept to the minimum; multi-cropped land may be avoided to the extent possible for such purposes, and acquisition of irrigated land, if unavoidable, may be kept to the minimum. These policies have been sent to the States/UTs for implementation.