

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
AGRICULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:125

ANSWERED ON:13.03.2012

DECLINE IN AGRICULTURAL LAND

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**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes leading to shrinkage in cultivable land;
- (b) if so, the details thereof during each of the last three years, State/UT-wise;
- (c) the reasons identified therefor alongwith its likely impact on foodgrain production;
- (d) whether any strategy has been chalked out to expand the cultivable land; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof alongwith the remedial measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check the reduction of cultivable/agricultural land?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (c): As per the Land Use Statistics data compiled by Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, the cultivable land in the country has come down to 182.5 million hectares during 2009-10 as compared to 182.7 million hectares during 2007-08. Further, land under non-agricultural purposes has increased from 25.7 million hectares in 2007-08 to 26.2 million hectares in 2009-10. The State-wise cultivable land and land under non- agricultural purposes for the said period is at annexure.

However, as a result of various initiatives taken by the Government to enhance production and productivity in the agriculture sector, the production of foodgrain has increased from 230.8 million tonnes in 2007-08 to 244.8 million tonnes in 2010- 11. Further, as per the latest estimates, the foodgrain production has touched a record high at 250.4 million tonnes in 2011-12. Thus, a marginal decline in the cultivable agricultural land is not likely to have any adverse impact on the foodgrain production.

(d) & (e): As per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, Land falls under the purview of State Governments and therefore, it is for the State Governments to bring in suitable Policy/Act/Legislation to check the diversion of agricultural and for non-agricultural purposes. With a view to prevent conversion of agricultural land for non agricultural purposes, Government of India has also 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 un-irrigated 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.

Further, to increase the agricultural land area in the country and for maintaining balance in different types of land 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).