

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1518

ANSWERED ON:21.08.2012

STORAGE OF WHEAT

Scindia Smt. Yashodhara Rajee;Singh Kunwar Rewati Raman

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether various State Governments had made demand with the Union Government for providing bags for the storage of wheat during the year 2012;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto, Statewise;
- (c) the number of occasions on which the said bags were provided by the Union Government to various State Governments;
- (d) whether unnecessary delay was caused in providing bags to various States including Madhya Pradesh as a result of which a number of problems were faced in procurement of rabi crops during the year 2012 leading to farmers agitation at some places;
- (e) if so, the names of people/agencies responsible for the same and the action taken/proposed to be taken against them;
- (f) whether the Government proposes to permit storage in plastic bags as a short term measure; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof and if not, the other steps proposed to be taken to ease the problem of procurement and storage?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) (b) & (c):- The Union Government does not directly provide bags to the States/Agencies for procurement of foodgrains. The States/their Agencies can purchase required packaging material either through Director General of Supplies and Disposals (DGS&D) or from the private market at rates not exceeding the DGS&D rates. However, the Department of Food & Public Distribution assists the procuring States/Agencies by organizing periodical coordination meetings with concerned States, Ministry of Textiles and DGS&D etc. for assessing the requirement, advance planning and co-coordinating the supply so that required packaging material becomes available in time. Such meetings for RMS 2012-13 were held on 22.11.2011, 6.3.2012 and 30.3.2012.

(d)&(e): For Rabi Marketing Season 2012-13 (April 2012-June 2012), initially a net requirement of only 7.82 lakh bales of jute bags was projected by the States/Agencies, for procurement through DGS&D, to be supplied during December 2011 to April/May 2012. Government of Madhya Pradesh projected a total requirement of 2.88 lakh bales and further informed that 1.44 lakh bales would be procured through DGS&D while the remaining 1.44 lakh bales would be purchased by them from private sources/market through tender system. This Projected requirement of 782 lakh bales subsequently increased to about 11.8 lakh bales due to revised procurement estimates and failure of the Government of Madhya Pradesh to procure bags from the open market. This increase in demand and resultant additional indents placed with DGS&D at belated stage, placed additional burden on supply of bags. However, the problem in availability of packaging material for RMS 2012-13 was resolved by relaxing prevailing norms for mandatory packaging of foodgrains in jute material and permitting use of 1.6 lakh bales of plastic bags by the procuring agencies of different States alongwith permission for use of 68,000 bales of old jute bags in case of Punjab and available/required number of old jute bags in case of Madhya Pradesh.

(f) & (g): Prevailing norms for mandatory use of jute material for packaging of foodgrains are relaxed on case to case basis to the required extent, to permit use of non-jute packaging material in case of need for doing so due to disruption or shortage in supply of jute packaging material. During RMS 2012-13, 1.6 lakh bales of plastic bags were permitted for packaging foodgrains. Permission for use of 3.5 lakh bales of plastic bags during KMS 2012-13, has already been granted in relaxation of prevailing jute norms.