

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:278
ANSWERED ON:26.02.2013
QUALITY OF SOIL
Joshi Shri Mahesh

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the quality of soil is deteriorating as a result of indiscriminate use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have undertaken a survey of soil conditions in the country and suggested remedial measures to improve the quality of soil;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the follow-up action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR)

(a) & (b) There is no scientific evidence of declining soil quality with judicious use of chemical fertilizers. However, indiscriminate and imbalance use of fertilizers or pesticides coupled with low addition of organic matter over years may result into multinutrient deficiencies.

(c) & (d) M/s. Greenpeace India launched 'Living Soils Campaign' nationwide to bring out grass root level realities concerning soil health and soil fertility management policies of the Central Government to save soils from the harmful impacts of chemical fertilizers. Greenpeace has been making the following suggestions:-

- (i) Create an alternate subsidy system that promotes ecological farming and use of organic soil amendments.
 - (ii) Shift the irrational subsidy policy for synthetic fertilizers to sustainable ecological practices in agriculture.
 - (iii) Re-focus scientific research on ecological alternatives, to identify agro-ecological practices that ensure future food security under the changing climate.
- (e) The Government is implementing National Project on Management of Soil Health & Fertility (NPMSH&F) to promote soil test based balanced and judicious use of fertilizers for improving soil health and its fertility through setting up / strengthening soil testing laboratories, trainings and field demonstrations on balanced use of fertilizers.

Apart from above, in order to promote organic / ecological farming, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed technology preparation of enriched / vermin-compost from various rural and urban wastes. Besides, improved and efficient strains of bio-fertilizers specific to different crops and soil types are being developed under Network project on biofertilizers. The ICAR also imparts training, organizes Front Line Demonstrations etc. to educate farmers on these aspects. The ICAR, is also implementing a Network Project on Organic Farming with 13 co-operating centres, spread over 12 States.