

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:180

ANSWERED ON:17.12.2013

FERTILITY OF SOIL

Dhurve Jyoti;Nagorao Shri Dudhgaonkar Ganeshrao

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether excessive use of chemical fertilizers for increasing foodgrains production has harmful effects on fertility of soil and human health;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to launch campaigns to educate the farmers regarding balanced use of chemical fertilizers and to adopt organic farming to improve the quality of soil as well as reduce the input costs of agricultural production and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to identify the areas where the soil is malnourished and lacks vital nutrients and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the details of soil testing centres established and soil health cards issued to the farmers to replenish the quality of soil in the country, State-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 180 DUE FOR REPLY ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2013.

(a) & (b): There is no scientific evidence of declining soil fertility from judicious use of chemical fertilizers. However, indiscriminate and imbalanced use of fertilizers coupled with low addition of organic matter may result in multinutrient deficiencies and deterioration of soil health over time. There is possibility of contamination of ground water due to excessive use of nitrogenous fertilizers, particularly in light textured soils, that has consequence on human and animal health if used for drinking purpose.

(c): Government is recommending soil test based balanced and Integrated Nutrient Management through conjunctive use of both inorganic and organic sources of plant nutrients to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers thereby preventing deterioration of soil health and contamination of ground water. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is recommending split application and placement of fertilizers, use of slow releasing nitrogenous fertilizers and nitrification inhibitors, and growing of leguminous crops. ICAR also imparts training and organizes Front Line Demonstrations to educate farmers on these aspects.

Under National Project on Management of Soil Health & Fertility, financial assistance of Rs. 10,000/- per training is provided to State Governments for organizing training programmes for farmers on importance of soil testing and on balanced use of fertilizers in crop productivity.

Government is promoting organic farming through National Project on Organic Farming, National Horticulture Mission, Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEH), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY) and Network Project on Organic Farming under ICAR.

Under National Project on Organic Farming various books / leaflets etc. prepared by National Centre of Organic Farming are distributed free of cost to educate farmers on adoption of organic farming. During the current financial year, initiative has been taken for broadcasting of Radio Spots on benefits of organic farming and judicious use of fertilizers to retain soil health.

Under National Horticulture Mission, Human Resource Development has been included as one of the major component under which training and exposure visits are used to educate the farmers about the use of balanced fertilizers and adoption of organic farming.

(d): Indian Institute of Soil Science, Bhopal has prepared geo-referenced soil fertility maps of 170 districts. These geo-referenced maps are useful in identification of areas where soil is malnourished and lacks vital nutrients, in monitoring soil fertility, and in fertilizer recommendations for balanced nutrient application.

(e): Statements indicating State-wise number of soil testing laboratories and soil health cards issued to the farmers are given at Annexure - I & II respectively.