

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3261

ANSWERED ON:11.02.2014

BALANCED USE OF FERTILIZERS

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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government has set up a task force on balanced use of fertilizers to advise on formulation of appropriate policy to encourage the balanced use of fertilizers;
- (b) if so, whether the said task force has since submitted its report to the Government;
- (c) if so, the details of the recommendation made by the said task force;
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to encourage the farmers to use bio-fertilizers;
- (e) whether the Government has discontinued the National Project on Use and Development Bio-fertilizers; and
- (f) if so, the alternative steps taken by the Government to promote the use of biofertilizers which is environment friendly and a cheaper source of plant nutrients?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (DR. CHARAN DAS MAHANT)

(a): Yes, Madam.

(b) & (c): The Task Force submitted its report in October, 2005. The recommendations of the Task Force are to enhance supply of NPK nutrients from organic sources, soil test based judicious use of chemical fertilizers in conjunction with organic manures, preparation of soil fertility maps for blocks, soil health cards for farmers, etc.

(d) to (f): Under the National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF), Government is promoting production of various organic inputs in the country including biofertilizers. NPOF provides financial assistance upto 25% of total financial outlay upto a ceiling of Rs.40 lakhs as credit linked back-ended subsidy for setting up Bio-fertilizers production units. Under the Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM), assistance is provided for supply of Rhizobium culture/Phosphate Solubilizing Bacteria, Azotobacter and Azospirillum culture to farmers. Under National Food Security Mission (NFSM) including Accelerated Pulses Production Programme (A3P), assistance for popularizing Rhizobium culture/Phosphate Solubilising bacteria is provided to the farmers under cluster demonstrations. Similarly, under Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millets Promotion (INSIMP) Programme, Phosphate Solubilising Bacteria/Azotobacter culture is provided to the farmers as part of technology demonstration.

Government has been advocating integrated use of chemical fertilizers and organic manures including biofertilizers for increasing production of major crops. All India Network Project on Soil Biodiversity-Biofertilizers is implemented by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for R & D on biofertilizers. Government is also promoting use of biofertilizers as advisory in package of practice for all crops and as important component of Integrated Nutrient Management.

Besides, the Government has notified biofertilizers like Rhizobium, Azotobacter, Azospirillum, Phosphate Solubilising Bacteria, Acetobacter, Potash Mobilizing Bacteria and Zinc Solubilizing Bacteria under the Fertilizer Quality Control Order (FCO), 1985. As a result of popularization of biofertilizers under the NPOF, production of biofertilizers in the country has increased significantly.

Further, different human resource development programmes through Trainings on Organic Farming are also imparted through National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF) and its six Regional Centres of Organic Farming (RCOFs) throughout the country and information on importance, usage and quality control of biofertilizers is being disseminated. Other steps include publication of Biannual Biofertilizer Newsletter, publication of various leaflets, booklets, brochures etc. Importance of biofertilizers is also broadcasted through Radio Jingles on FM channels.

National Project on Use & Development of bio-fertilizers was sub-summed under National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF) with effect from October, 2004.