

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
AGRICULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5666

ANSWERED ON:28.04.2015

ARTIFICIAL RIPENING OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken any strict action against the persons responsible for causing adverse affect on the health of people by increasing the size and pre-ripening of vegetables and fruits through artificial means during the last three years and current year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has any mechanism to check such practices; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN)

(a) to (d): As per information provided by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, surveillance and enforcement activities are carried for the complete range of Food products, including Fruits and Vegetables. However, no specific information is maintained regarding use of ripening agent such as Calcium Carbide.

Regulation 2.3.5 of Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on sales) Regulations, 2011 prohibits the use of calcium carbide in ripening of fruits. It stipulates as follows:

# Prohibition of use of carbide gas in ripening of fruits: No person shall sell or offer or expose for sale or have in his premises for the purpose of sale or have been artificially ripened by use of acetylene gas, commonly known as carbide gas".

FSSAI has taken following steps to check the use of calcium carbide, which are as follows:

# Letters have been sent to all the State/UT Governments informing about the harmful effects of Calcium Carbide as well as the methodology for detection of Acetylene in godowns and storage chambers.

#Letters have been sent to all Commissioners of Food Safety/Food (Health) Authorities in States and UTs informing them about the approved concentration of ethylene for ripening of fruits.

# Enforcement of the provisions of the Act and Regulations is primarily the responsibility of States/ UTs. Random samples of food items are drawn by the State Food Safety Officers for testing. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India(FSSAI) has issued a circular to all the Principal Secretary (Health) and Food Safety Commissioners of all States and UTs on the need of periodic inspections and monitoring with respect to directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the matter related to Writ Petition no. 681 of 2004- Centre for Public Litigation Vs. Union of India dated 22nd October 2013.

#A note was uploaded on FSSAI official website [www.fssai.gov.in](http://www.fssai.gov.in) to make the public aware to the effect that "Consuming fruits ripened artificially by Calcium Carbide may pose health problems".