

14

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
(2005-2006)**

FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

(DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION)

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2005-2006)

**{Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/
Observations contained in the Tenth Report of the
Standing Committee on Agriculture (2004-2005)}**

FOURTEENTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

March, 2006/Phalgun, 1927 (Saka)

FOURTEENTH REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
(2005-2006)

(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND EDUCATION)**

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2005-2006)

**[Action Taken by the Government on the
Recommendations/Observations contained in the Tenth Report
of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2004-2005)]**

Presented to Lok Sabha on 21.02.2006

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 21.02.2006



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

March, 2006/Phalguna, 1927 (Saka)

Price: Rs.

© 2006 By Lok Sabha Secretariat

Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha
(Eleventh Edition) and Printed by

<CONTENTS>

		PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE.....		(iii)
INTRODUCTION.....		(v)
CHAPTER I	Report	
CHAPTER II	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government	
CHAPTER III	Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies	
CHAPTER IV	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee	
CHAPTER V	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited	

APPENDICES

- I. Minutes of the sitting of the Committee held on 18 January, 2006.

- II. Analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations contained in the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2004-2005) (14th Lok Sabha)

Composition of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2005-2006)

Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav – Chairman

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Hiten Barman
3. Shri Manoranjan Bhakta
4. Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava
5. Shri Kuldeep Bishnoi
6. Smt. Anuradha Choudhary
7. Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan
8. Shri Khagen Das
9. Shri Dharmendra
10. Shri Sharanjit Singh Dhillon
11. Shri Raghunath Jha
12. Shri Nihal Chand Chauhan
13. Smt. Rupatai Diliprao Patil Nilangekar
14. Shri Sippiparai Ravichandran
15. Shri K.J.S.P. Reddy
16. Shri Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy
17. Shri Harihar Swain
18. Shri M.P. Veerendra Kumar
19. Shri Mahboob Zahedi
- 20 * Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
- 21 # Vacant

RAJYA SABHA

22. Smt. Mohsina Kidwai
23. Shri Harish Rawat
24. Dr. M.S.Gill
25. Shri Pyarelal Khandelwal
26. Shri Raj Nath Singh
27. Shri Sk. Khabir Uddin Ahmed
28. Shri Bhagwati Singh
29. Shri Datta Meghe
30. Shri Bashistha Narain Singh
31. Shri Sharad Anantrao Joshi

* Shri Prakash V.Patil ceased to be the member of this Committee owing to his demise on 21 October, 2005 and the vacancy thus created was filled by nomination of Shri Deepender Singh Hooda, to this Committee vide L.S. Bulletin Part-II, Para No.1905, dated 9th December, 2005

Shri Lal Chandra Kol ceased to be the member of this Committee due to his expulsion from Lok Sabha w.e.f. 23 December, 2005.

SECRETARIAT

1.	Shri John Joseph	-	Secretary
2.	Shri A.K.Singh	-	Joint Secretary
3.	Shri Hardev Singh	-	Deputy Secretary
4.	Shri D.S. Malha	-	Under Secretary
5.	Shri Anil Kumar	-	Sr. Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on Agriculture, [2005-2006] having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Fourteenth Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2004-2005) (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research and Education) for the year 2005-2006.

2. The Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2004-2005) on Demands for Grants (2005-2006) of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research and Education) was presented to Lok Sabha on 20.4.2005 and laid in Rajya Sabha on the same day. The Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research and Education) was requested to furnish action taken replies of the Government to the recommendations contained in the Tenth Report. The replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received.

3. The Committee considered the action taken replies furnished by the Government at their sitting held on 18.1.2006, approved the draft comments and adopted the Fourteenth Report. Minutes of the sitting are placed at Appendix I.

4. An analysis of the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Tenth Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given in Appendix-II.

**NEW DELHI;
18, January, 2006
28 Pausa, 1927 (Saka)**

**PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV
*Chairman,
Standing Committee on Agriculture***

CHAPTER I

Report

This Report of the Committee on Agriculture deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Tenth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2004-2005) on Demands for Grants (2005-2006) of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research & Education) which was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid in the Rajya Sabha on 20.04.2005.

1.2 The Action taken replies have been received from the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research & Education) in respect of all the 16 recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorised as under:

- (i) Recommendations/Observations that have been accepted by the Government (Chapter II of the Report)

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 (Total-11)

- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's action taken reply (Chapter III of the Report) - NIL

- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which action taken replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee (Chapter IV of the Report)

Recommendations Sl. Nos. 2, 6 and 13 (Total-3)

- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited. (Chapter V)

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 1 and 9 (Total-2)

1.3 The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their recommendations.

Recommendation No. 1

Meagre Plan Allocations to DARE/ICAR

1.4 The Committee note that the DARE was provided Rs. 775.00 crore as Plan Allocation (BE) for 2002-2003 (the first year of the Tenth Plan), Rs. 775.00 crore BE during 2003-2004, Rs. 1,000.00 crore BE in 2004-2005 and Rs. 1,150.00 crore BE in 2005-2006 against the total Tenth Plan Allocation of Rs. 5,368 crore. These BE allocations were further reduced at RE stage every year except in 2003-2004 (the second year of the Tenth Plan) when BE and RE were the same. Plan RE in 2002-2003 went down to Rs. 725.00 crore and in 2004-2005 it was Rs. 900.00 crore. The Committee find that the above figures, constitute 0.54%, 0.52%, 0.61% and 0.54% on the Plan BE side and on the Plan RE side 0.53%, 0.55%, and 0.55% during 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 respectively with reference to the Central Plan Outlay.

The Committee note that although the Central Plan Outlays have been increasing very steeply as is evident from the figures – Rs. 1,44,037.80 crore (2002-2003), Rs. 1,47,892.60 crore (2003-2004), Rs. 1,63,720.29 crore (2004-2005) and Rs. 2,11,253.49 crore (2005-2006), yet DARE's percentage scaled down from 0.61% in 2004-2005 to 0.54% in 2005-2006. Apparently, if such an unhealthy trend is not arrested, the allocations at RE stage may stand drastically reduced.

The Committee note that AGDP contribution to the GDP is about 22% whereas the DARE's BE/RE allocations have been merely between 0.29% to 0.33% of AGDP at current prices from 1999-2000 to 2004-2005.

While acknowledging the vital role of Agricultural Research in the strategy for reviving and encouraging agricultural diversification, the Government has done precious little to enhance the budgetary allocations to DARE, which, in the considered view of the Committee, must be to the tune of at least 1 per cent of AGDP in order to set in motion the wheel of Second Green Revolution. There is no denying the fact that India, given her huge agrarian base, could emerge as developed nation with the transformation of agricultural research which the nation can ill-afford to neglect merely for want of adequate funds.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

1.5 The recommendation of the Committee that DARE should be made available 1% of AGDP as budgetary allocation, was referred to Planning Commission for necessary steps in this direction. The Planning Commission responded that “It makes Plan allocations on the basis of on-going projects and utilization of funds under the project implemented by the ICAR. It has also been liberal in supporting ICAR’s new research projects and would continue to be so in the future, if the projects fall within its domain and are consistent with its mandate”. The Department will continue soliciting the funding support from Planning Commission for the on-going projects as well as initiatives addressing emerging issues so that these could be funded adequately.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.6 The Committee note with anguish that in spite of positive indications/assurances given by the Planning Commission year after year to continue to liberally support the Department's on-going projects on the basis of utilisation of funds for the project implemented by ICAR as well as new research projects/initiatives, it seems to be lack of initiatives on the part of DARE that the Department has neither come out with concrete and convincing new initiatives/schemes/projects falling within its domain/mandate needed to address emerging issues in the wake of tough global competition in agrarian sector/industry nor it could upgrade and rejuvenate its on-going research projects to come out of negatively fluctuating stalemate in agrarian produces especially foodgrains.

The Committee strongly criticize the failure of the Department year after year in procuring the funds upto 1% of AGDP from Planning Commission and advice the Department to improve its efficiency in formulating and presenting convincingly before the Planning Commission the new research projects addressing the pending/emerging issues/thrust areas in agrarian sector in the country.

Recommendation No. 2

Urgent need for One Time Catch up Grant to DARE/ICAR

1.7 The Committee note that the DARE has been repeatedly projecting a demand of One Time Catch-up Grant before the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance since Eighth Five Year Plan. During the Tenth Plan, the Department had projected a requirement of Rs. 1,000 crore as One Time Catch-up Grant, with a view to change the

age-old agrarian research and education system, laboratories, infrastructure, equipment and machinery, etc. with the latest state-of-the art equipments/facilities. Unfortunately, the denial of long-felt and essentially needed one-time Catch-Up Grant to DARE has hamstrung our agricultural scientists and researchers. The Committee would like to caution the Government of the inherent dangers lurking in the horizon in the context of new WTO regime if the ICAR is denied necessary wherewithal for setting up state-of-the-art facilities to meet the emerging new challenges. The Committee would also like to remind the Government of the declaration made in the Presidential Address that agricultural research and extension will be another area of priority of his Government, that funding for agricultural research is being stepped up and that New Centres of Excellence will be promoted to increase the number of scientists and agri-graduates to enable the further modernization of agriculture. If the Government really feels concerned and wishes to give a thrust to agricultural research, there is no reason why the nation cannot afford to spare a one-time catch-up grant of Rs. 1,000 crore for DARE. The Committee would like to be apprised of the response of Ministry of Finance at the action taken stage.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

1.8 The recommendation of the Committee emphasizing that DARE should be made available Rs. 1000 crore as One Time Catch-up Grant was referred to Planning Commission, which responded that “A separate catch up grant may not be necessary since the requirement of funds for upgrading and updating the research facilities of

ICAR's institutions has already been taken care of while approving the proposals during Tenth Five Year Plan”

The Xth Plan SFCs/EFCs agreed to a meager amount, that too in some very specific cases, to meet the urgent need of renovation of age old infrastructure. The National Agricultural Research System comprising a large network of ICAR institutions and SAUs has dilapidated buildings, laboratories, classrooms and other farm and research related facilities as well as outdated/obsolete equipment needing large-scale replacement/upgradation/modernization. The Department still requires substantial funds on this count. For this purpose Rs. 1000 crore were proposed to the Planning Commission as part of the Department's Xth Plan proposals, but separate funds for this purpose were not allocated or provided during Xth Plan/Annual Plans, so far.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.9 The Committee are not at all satisfied with this response of the Planning Commission that a separate catch-up grant may not be necessary since the requirement of funds for upgrading and updating the research facilities of ICAR's institution has already been taken care of while approving the proposals during Tenth Five Year Plan.

The Committee know from their experience while examining the Demands for Grants of the DARE/ICAR every year that the annual increase in budgetary allocations during the Ninth Plan and first four years of the Tenth Plan have hardly been sufficient to cover the annual inflationary cost of the on-going recurring research/maintenance expenses and it is unwise to expect the Ministry to use the

same scarce funds for renovation of age-old infrastructure/research-related facilities and obsolete equipments needing large scale replacement/upgradation/modernization.

The Committee, therefore, once again unanimously urge the Planning Commission to put an end to their rigid and indifferent stand against this urgent requirement of One-time Catch-up Grant and if the need is felt or there is any doubt about genuineness of the Ministry's demand for one-time catch-up grants, the Planning Commission can collect the first-hand information by having an official on-the-spot examination of the ICAR/SAUs etc. before rejecting routinely this one-time Catch-up Grant of Rs. 1,000 crore for DARE/ICAR.

Recommendation No. 5

Need to make all the KVKs Fully Functional

1.10 The Committee observe that when they enquired from the Department about the latest position with regard to (a) fully functional; (b) semi/partially functional; (c) non-functional Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in the country, the Department avoided specific answer and replied, "a total of 451 KVKs have been sanctioned till February 2005 including 128 KVKs during the current financial year. Out of these 451 KVKs, 8 were non-functional; two of which have been made functional during this year." When the Committee again asked through a written supplementary question in a tabular form, the Department removed the specific column about the latest status of KVKs in their reply and avoided a direct reply.

During the oral evidence when asked that in Bihar only 25 per cent of the KVKs are functioning and rest are non-functional, the representative of the Department merely stated that efforts are being made to revive the closed down KVKs.

The Committee further observe that the Department had received some complaints about the mal-functioning of the KVK in Madhubani district of Bihar and Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. The complaints from KVK, Madhubani and KVK, Allahabad were received on 29th August 2003 and 6th January 2005 and the fact-finding enquiry was initiated on 18th December 2003 and 4th February 2005 respectively. The Department took more than 3 months to initiate the fact-finding enquiry in case of KVK Madhubani and about a month in case of KVK Allahabad. The Committee would like the Department to take prompt action on the complaints received regarding mal-functioning of KVKs in the country and fix a reasonable time limit to complete the enquiry in the matter and take exemplary action against the officials held guilty.

The Committee would also like to be apprised of the outcome of the fact-finding enquiry in each case at the earliest along with the details about the semi/partially functioning KVKs and the time limit by which the Department proposes to make them fully functional.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

1.11 It was indicated that 451 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) include 128 KVKs sanctioned during the 2004-05, and 8 non-functional KVKs of which two were made functional. Funds were provided to all the 445 KVKs which are functional.

As far as Bihar is concerned, out of 26 KVKs sanctioned in Bihar, 25 are functional and the remaining one (Jahanabad) is non-functional. The land for reopening the KVK at Jahanabad is yet to be transferred from the State Government in favour of Rajendra Agricultural University, Samastipur, Pusa (Bihar).

The fact-finding enquiry report for the KVK at Madhubani (Bihar) has been submitted to the competent authority. Similarly, the fact-finding report of the KVK at Allahabad has been completed and is under submitted to ICAR authorities.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.12 The Committee expected that the Department would draw correct inference of the recommendation of the Committee to expeditiously make the semi/partially-functional KVKs fully functional but from the reply of the Government it seems that they could not make the distinction between fully-functional and partially/semi-functional KVKs as they have been avoiding the proper reply in this regard time and again.

The Committee are very well aware that although the Department is placing 445 KVKs (out of a total of 451 KVKs) under the functional category, yet the ground reality is that most of the KVKs opened during last five years are merely partially/semi-functional and are yet to be made fully functional. But it seems that the Department is happy with just increasing the KVKs in numbers only and is hardly interested in the qualitative and optimum utilization of KVKs by the ultimate beneficiaries, i.e. agriculture community of the country.

The Committee had also observed that they would like to be apprised of the outcome/final action taken by the Department on the fact-finding enquiry in each case, namely KVK, Madhubani (Bihar) and KVK, Allahabad. However, the Department has not apprised the Committee about the facts/results of fact-finding enquiries in both the cases and the final action taken/proposed to be taken by the Department in each case through their Action Taken Replies furnished to the Committee in 3 months' time. The Committee feel that the Department has taken much longer time than desired at every stage, viz. (i) in initiating a fact-finding enquiry in about 3 months in case of KVK, Madhubani; (ii) in submitting the fact-finding enquiry report to the Competent authority, i.e. about 18-19 months time taken in case of KVK, Madhubani (from December to July 2005 when the Action Taken Replies have been furnished to the Committee); and (iii) it is still not clear from the reply of the Government that how much time will they need in taking any action on the fact-finding report.

Since the Department has not mentioned anything in its reply with regard to the recommendation of the Committee to fix a time limit to complete the enquiry and take exemplary action against the official held guilty, the Committee strongly urge the Department to frame suitable guidelines to fix a stipulated time limit for completing every stage of enquiry, i.e. from initiating a fact-finding enquiry to submitting the report and final action taken by the competent authorities on that report. The Committee would also like to be apprised of the contents of the fact-finding enquiry report in both the cases and the final action taken by the Department on the reports within two months' time from the date of submission of

enquiry report to ICAR authorities. The Committee may be apprised of the action taken thereon by the DARE/ICAR against the officials found guilty.

Recommendation No. 6

Urgent Need to open more need-based Research Centres/KVKs in Himalayan Region/North East States

1.13 The Committee also feel that the Department has paid scant attention to the need for establishing Research Centres/KVKs in the Himalayan Region/North East States if compared with other parts/agro-climatic zones of the country.

The Committee, therefore, urge the Department to open more need-based Research Centres/KVKs, especially in the area of Horticulture, Floriculture and Aromatic and Medicinal Plants in the Himalayan Region/North East States/Tribal Areas and educate the farmers of these areas for diversification of crops for rewarding returns. The Committee also urge the Department to look into the possibility of opening more KVKs in the 24-Parganas District in West Bengal having an area over 300 kilometres but with only one KVK and the Latur District in Maharashtra which is having no KVK at all till date.

The Committee also feel that the setting up of KVKs should not be hindered for want of requisite land, as per the extant norms, given the constraints of State Government to spare land due to increasing pressure of population and industrialization. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the criteria for sanctioning of KVKs both for the plains and the hills should be reviewed/modified so that setting up of KVKs is not hindered due to non-availability of 50 acres/33 acres of lands.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

1.14 As far as the establishment of KVK in North East States is concerned, in addition to 13 KVKs existing till the end of IX Plan, the Council has sanctioned, 23 more KVKs till February, 2005. A number of site selection committees have been constituted to examine the logistics for establishment of KVKs in the remaining districts of North East States.

There are South-24 Parganas and North-24 Parganas districts in West Bengal. The Council has already sanctioned a KVK for South 24-Parganas district. The establishment of a KVK in North 24-Parganas is in the process.

A KVK has been sanctioned for Latur district of Maharashtra during 2005-06. As per the standard procedure, a site selection committee is constituted to examine the logistics for establishment of a KVK based on the proposals received from a district. Based on the recommendations/observations of the Committee including the constraints of availability of land, a decision is taken for establishment of a KVK with the available land. However, adequate land is essentially needed for construction of building and development of instructional farm including demonstration unit. The site selection committee, while recommending the proposals, takes into cognizance the factors like hill areas, population density and availability of land etc.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.15 The Committee strongly condemn the tendency of the Department in furnishing incomplete and vague replies. In the instant case, the Department has not mentioned anything with regard to opening more need-based research centers of

various National Research Institutes under the domain of DARE/ICAR and more KVKs in entire Himalayan Region as has been recommended by the Committee in addition to the North-East States.

The Committee, therefore, once again emphatically reiterate that the Department should pay immediate attention to the need for establishing of more need-based Research Centres and KVKs in the Himalayan Region.

Recommendation No. 7

Post-Harvest Losses of Rs. 51,500 crore per annum of Horticultural Produces

1.16 The Committee note that ICAR has been making efforts to develop post-harvest technologies (PHT) through its Institutes and All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) for reduction of post-harvest losses and value addition in the post-harvest chain. During the Tenth Plan, the AICRP on PHT has been expanded to include all produce from crops, livestock and fisheries sectors and the budget allocation has been enhanced to Rs. 3,895 lakh from Rs. 1,184 lakh during the Ninth Plan.

The Committee also note that these post-harvest losses are estimated to the tune of Rs. 51,500 crore and the Apex agrarian research body, viz. ICAR has hardly done anything concrete to collect and analyse the authentic data of such losses for the whole country during the previous Nine Five Year plans except for a recently made very limited area study of these losses under NATP.

The Committee, therefore, urge the Department to take up the task of collecting the authentic data on post-harvest losses of agrarian and allied sectors produce on all-

India basis and make all out efforts in developing and getting implemented the technologies developed by them to check such losses on top priority basis. The technologies developed or advances made by other developed countries like Malaysia, Brazil, Thailand, etc. in preserving and processing of the variety of agricultural produce may also be studied and suitably adopted, if feasible, to avoid such a huge recurring national loss.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

1.17 As recommended by Committee, it has been decided to undertake the study on collecting, compiling and analyzing the data on post harvest losses of all the major agrarian produces through the All India Coordinated Research Project on Post Harvest Technology under *Engineering Division of the Council*. Besides, the centers are continuing to develop new technologies for checking post harvest losses and for value addition activities in the production catchments. The relevant technologies developed earlier are also being demonstrated by the 33 centres of the Post Harvest Scheme.

As suggested by the Committee the technologies developed or advances made by other developed countries like Malaysia, Brazil, Thailand etc. in preserving and processing of the different varieties of agricultural produce will be studied and suitably adopted, if found feasible, to avoid such a huge recurring national loss.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.18 **The Committee would like to be apprised of the outcome of the study being conducted by ICAR to arrest the causes of post harvest losses and also about the**

analysis of the technology adopted in other advance countries like Malaysia, Brazil, Thailand etc. in preservation and processing of agrarian and allied produces.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 11

Role of DARE/ICAR in finding solutions and providing Strategic and Scientific help to Tsunami-Affected Areas

1.19 The Committee express their profound grief over the tremendous loss of human beings and property by the devastating Tsunami waves.

The Committee note that DARE/ICAR has formulated an action plan for extending strategic and scientific/technological help to expeditiously revive/bring back to life the agrarian and allied activities of the people in Tsunami-affected areas of the nation.

The Committee, therefore, strongly urge the Department to make all-out efforts in implementing their own action plan meant for the rehabilitation of the Tsunami-survivors and extend all possible strategic and technological help to all other Ministries/Departments engaged in welfare activities in those areas.

The Committee also recommend that since DARE/ICAR has the requisite know-how to tackle the socio-environmental issues caused by devastating Tsunami, they should have a separate cell or a nominated team of required specialized scientists/work force to deal with agrarian research, education and extension issues concerning the Tsunami-affected areas on priority basis. The separate cell/work force may continue to extend their services for a period of 2-3 years or till the problems/issues are resolved and normalcy returns in the affected areas.

The Department should come forward with their additional financial requirements, if any, for tackling Tsunami-related issues and logically convince the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance as a lot of research and innovation is called for in reclamation of degraded soil in the Tsunami-affected Coastal areas and in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

1.20 The detailed survey/ studies on the after- effects and the extent of damage caused by Tsunami have been carried out by the ICAR Institutions located in the affected States. The action plans to implement various programmes have been prepared by the respective State development Departments in consultation with the concerned ICAR Institutions and State Agricultural Universities to provide necessary technical know-how. The studies also included the socio-economic aspect of the fishermen community located in the affected areas of the country. Some of the ICAR Institutions have drawn up Ad-hoc Cess Fund Project proposals for their implementation in the affected areas.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.21 **The Committee feel that ICAR should constantly keep on monitoring and reviewing the progress made with regard to reviving agrarian and allied sectors in the Tsunami-affected areas and should apprise the Committee about the same from time to time/every three months.**

Recommendation No. 13

Need to make the farmers aware about the WTO, GATT and Genetic Engineering-related Issues

1.22 The Committee note that the DARE/ICAR has brought out some publications on WTO, GATT, Genetic Engineering, etc. Since the issues related to WTO, GATT and Genetic Engineering are very sensitive, they have the scope of getting largely misunderstood by the masses engaged in agrarian and allied sectors. The Committee, therefore, feel that it is a high time for the Department to bring out easy to understand and illustrated publications in the regional and local languages of the farmers to remove the fear psychosis created in the domain of genetic engineering, about WTO and the GATT.

Such publications would undoubtedly go a long way in removing unwarranted fears and misconceptions in the farming community and make them realize the true benefits they can derive from the genetically engineered seeds and the technological advances made in the field. The Committee further recommend that scientists of ICAR should have first hand and extensive interaction with the farmers and explain to them the correct position about these sensitive issues.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

1.23 The Directorate of Information and Publications of Agriculture of ICAR has brought out several publications in English, Hindi covering the aspects of WTO, GATT and Genetic Engineering. The Directorate has also published several popular articles in the journals i.e. Indian Farming, Indian Horticulture and Kheti (Hindi). The information was also made available on ICAR website as well as through various exhibitions organised at different locations to farming community.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.24 **The Committee express their anguish over the perennial habit of deliberately avoiding/ignoring the main crux of the recommendation of the Committee and furnishing the old and inconclusive reply time and again. The Committee call upon the Department to concentrate on Committee's recommendation and bring out easy to understand and illustrated publication in regional/local languages of the farmers on sensitive issues, namely, WTO, GATT, Genetic Engineering, etc. and that the**

scientists of ICAR should have first hand and extensive interaction with the farmers and explain to them the correct position about these sensitive issues.

The Committee take a serious view of the oft-repeated response of the Department in furnishing the improper and incomplete information in their action taken replies to the recommendations/observations of the Committee as well as to the questions asked by the Committee and reiterate their earlier recommendation as explained in the above para and urge the Department to implement the same in its letter and spirit and avoid beating about the bush on such important topics.

Recommendation No. 14

Need to find Remedies for Frost-induced Jhulsa Disease in Potato

1.25 The Committee note that the farmers of Farrukhabad-Etawah-Mainpuri belt in Uttar Pradesh who have been growing potatoes suffer huge crop losses owing to frost-induced Jhulsa disease in potato which cripples the entire crop in the said belt. There have also been reports of extensive damage to soyabean crop in Madhya Pradesh. The Committee, therefore, desire the Department to examine measures for eliminating these diseases and report to the Committee about the action taken at the earliest.

The Committee would also like that a firm mechanism be devised so that all cases of large scale damage to crops due to disease are immediately reported and the ICAR scientists rush necessary relief/expert advice for containing the damage, besides putting a check on recurrence of the disease.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

1.26 Farrukhabad, Etah and Mainpuri belt of Uttar Pradesh is the leading potato belt. The potato crop suffers huge losses due to late blight particularly in those years when winter is prolonged and late blight favourable conditions develop. Besides Kufri Bahar variety of potato which is very popular with the farmers is very susceptible to late blight disease and under disease-favourable conditions succumbs to the disease. To minimize the losses from the incidence of the disease the measures required to be adopted by the farmers include: (i) Start spraying the crop with fungicides like Dithane M-45 as soon as Central Potato Research Institute Campus (CPRIC), Modipuram issues warning regarding the appearance of the disease; (ii) the diseased tubers be sorted out and removed before and after cold storage before planting; (iii) late blight resistant variety recommended for the area be planted in place of the very susceptible variety Kufri Bahar.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.27 The Committee would like to know whether the farmers are informed through extension workers about the measures to be adopted by them (farmers) as mentioned in the reply of the Government to the recommendation No. 14 of the 10th Report of the Committee (2004-2005).

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation No. 3

Shortfall in DARE/ICAR Expenditure during Ninth & Tenth Plans

2.1 The Committee note that during Ninth Plan (1997-2002), the Department had an approved Plan Outlay of Rs. 3376.95 crore but was provided with only Rs. 2,749.39 crore (BE) through Annual Plans. This amount was further reduced at RE stage and total actual allocation for the entire Ninth Plan was Rs. 2,514.17 crore. The expenditure of the entire Ninth Plan is reported to be Rs. 2,479.19 crore. Thus, leaving a shortfall of Rs. 34.98 crore in the Ninth Plan.

The Committee further note that during the first three years of the Tenth Plan (2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005), the actual expenditure is reported to be Rs. 680.56 crore against the RE of Rs. 725.00 crore in 2002-2003, Rs. 701.78 crore against the RE of Rs. 775.00 crore in 2003-2004 and the expenditure figures for 2004-2005 are not made available by the Department and will be known later on against the RE of Rs. 900.00 crore. The shortfall was Rs. 44.44 crore in 2002-2003 and Rs. 73.22 crore in 2003-2004. Thus, the shortfall in expenditure during the entire Ninth Plan was 1.39% while it is 6.12% in the first year of Tenth Plan and 9.44% in the Second year of Tenth Plan. Although the Department has made a tall claim of achieving financial targets upto 98 per cent, the Committee find the increasing graph of shortfall in expenditure in previous years only depicts the inability of the Department to achieve the financial targets.

The Committee are worried over the Department's failure to spend the scarce resources allocated to them, since their inability of spending on approved plans and programmes may be viewed as a reflection on its performance and may adversely affect its future demand for higher allocations, howsoever it might be. The Committee fail to see any reason why the funds allocated cannot be timely and effectively spent with the streamlining of internal financial and administrative procedure and regular monitoring of performance.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

As a result of Zero Base Budgeting exercise 235 on-going schemes of IXth Plan were merged into 71 main schemes each along with respective sub-schemes in consultation with Planning Commission; thus, necessitating the formulation of Xth Plan SFCs/EFCs memos in the form of converged schemes. The formulation of Xth Plan SFCs/EFCs memos took substantial time as the relevant information of various sub-schemes had to be integrated with the main scheme in each individual case. Subsequently these Xth Plan proposals were circulated to Appraisal Agencies like Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, etc. for their comments before convening the meetings of these SFCs/EFCs. The Department could complete the process of Xth Plan SFCs/EFCs approvals by March 2004. The clearance of 6 CCEA cases of major schemes i.e. each costing more than Rs. 100 crore too took substantial time. Accordingly, the expenditure during the first two years of Xth Plan remained less than the allocation as funds meant for infrastructure development like procurement of equipment, civil works / labs, etc. could not be

utilized in the absence of SFCs/EFCs approval. Since all the schemes are cleared by SFCs/EFCs/CCEA, the Department is implementing the approved Plan Schemes and the expenditure is picking up.

Recommendation No. 4

Tardy Budgetary Process requiring some Reformative Changes

The Committee in their 2nd Report (2004-2005) on Demands for Grants (2004-2005) of the Department had observed that there is a greater need for serious scrutiny of the entire Budgetary process. The Committee find that the budgetary process begins with the preparation of Budgetary proposals in August by the concerned Department till actually receiving the RE/BE allocation from Ministry of Finance in the second week of January. The Department then conveys the funds to the concerned Institutes by the first week of February, thus, stretching the entire budgetary exercises from August to February. The Committee reiterate that the entire budgetary process and procedure, involving about 8 months, has actually given birth to an avoidable evil of mis-utilisation of funds in a hurried manner or non-utilisation by the concerned institutes of the Department who find themselves under psychological pressure and there is apprehension of losing valuable but scarce financial resources made available to them by the Ministry of Finance at the fag end of the financial year. The Committee are anguished to note that the chronic malady of mis-utilisation/or over-utilisation of scarce resources can certainly be remedied if funds were made available to the concerned Department sometime in the month of December or a little earlier.

The Department in its Action Taken Reply on the Second Report of the Committee has stated, that “the recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture is valuable. The above recommendation of the Committee was forwarded to Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission. The Ministry of Finance has intimated that they have noted the recommendation and that all efforts will be made by them to comply with the recommendation. The Planning Commission also communicated that the budget allocations for the ongoing schemes/projects are being made on the basis of approved Annual Plan outlays, which allows a degree of certainty about the availability of funds to the Department and its lower formation.”

The Committee are, however, perturbed to note that the RE/BE allocations were received from the Ministry of Finance on 3rd January 2005, but the Department took about one month’s time in communicating the final allocations to the Institutes/NRC/PD concerned. This has happened so in the era of cyber/net revolution in the country where every State/District headquarters has the cyber connectivity. Evidently, for all practical purposes, the Department and the Ministry of Finance have failed to bring about any positive change or reform in their entire budgetary process during 2004-2005 despite their assurance.

The Committee wish to reiterate that it would be in the overall interest of the Department if the budgetary process is streamlined so as to ensure that the final Plan and Non-Plan allocations are conveyed to the concerned Institutes/Divisions within the Department by the month of December every year for an effective and optimal utilization of the scarce financial resources.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The recommendation of the Committee for streamlining the budgetary process for ensuring that the final Plan and Non-Plan allocations are conveyed to the concerned Institutes / Divisions by the month of December every year, was referred to Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance. The Planning Commission responded that “Planning Commission will support any step that may speed up the budgetary process”. The Ministry of Finance responded that “As far as the Budgetary process is concerned, pre-budget meetings are held during October and November to finalize ceilings after taking into consideration the expenditure trend till September. Subsequently, the ceilings for RE (both Plan and Non-Plan) for the current year and BE (Non-Plan) for the next year are communicated to the respective Ministries towards the end of December and latest by 1st week of January. It is the endeavor of Ministry of Finance that ceilings be communicated at the earliest so that the Ministries are able to utilize their funds in an optimal manner”.

In the light of the recommendation of the Committee, the Department would take expeditious steps to distribute and communicate the allocated funds on the receipt of Plan and Non-Plan budgetary communication from Planning Commission / Ministry of Finance.

Recommendation No. 5

Need to make all the KVKs Fully Functional

The Committee observe that when they enquired from the Department about the latest position with regard to (a) fully functional; (b) semi/partially functional; (c) non-functional Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in the country, the Department avoided specific answer and replied, “a total of 451 KVKs have been sanctioned till February 2005 including 128 KVKs during the current financial year. Out of these 451 KVKs, 8 were non-functional; two of which have been made functional during this year.” When the Committee again asked through a written supplementary question in a tabular form, the Department removed the specific column about the latest status of KVKs in their reply and avoided a direct reply.

During the oral evidence when asked that in Bihar only 25 per cent of the KVKs are functioning and rest are non-functional, the representative of the Department merely stated that efforts are being made to revive the closed down KVKs.

The Committee further observe that the Department had received some complaints about the mal-functioning of the KVK in Madhubani district of Bihar and Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. The complaints from KVK, Madhubani and KVK, Allahabad were received on 29th August 2003 and 6th January 2005 and the fact-finding enquiry was initiated on 18th December 2003 and 4th February 2005 respectively. The Department took more than 3 months to initiate the fact-finding enquiry in case of KVK Madhubani and about a month in case of KVK Allahabad. The Committee would like the Department to take prompt action on the complaints received regarding mal-

functioning of KVKs in the country and fix a reasonable time limit to complete the enquiry in the matter and take exemplary action against the officials held guilty.

The Committee would also like to be apprised of the outcome of the fact-finding enquiry in each case at the earliest along with the details about the semi/partially functioning KVKs and the time limit by which the Department proposes to make them fully functional.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

It was indicated that 451 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) include 128 KVKs sanctioned during the 2004-05, and 8 non-functional KVKs of which two were made functional. Funds were provided to all the 445 KVKs which are functional.

As far as Bihar is concerned, out of 26 KVKs sanctioned in Bihar, 25 are functional and the remaining one (Jahanabad) is non-functional. The land for reopening the KVK at Jahanabad is yet to be transferred from the State Government in favour of Rajendra Agricultural University, Samastipur, Pusa (Bihar).

The fact-finding enquiry report for the KVK at Madhubani (Bihar) has been submitted to the competent authority. Similarly, the fact finding report of the KVK at Allahabad has been completed and is under submitted to ICAR authorities.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

For comments of the Committee please refer to Paragraph No. 1.12 of Chapter – I of the Report.

Recommendation No. 7

Post-Harvest Losses of Rs. 51,500 crore per annum of Horticultural Produces

The Committee note that ICAR has been making efforts to develop post-harvest technologies (PHT) through its Institutes and All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) for reduction of post-harvest losses and value addition in the post-harvest chain. During the Tenth Plan, the AICRP on PHT has been expanded to include all produce from crops, livestock and fisheries sectors and the budget allocation has been enhanced to Rs. 3,895 lakh from Rs. 1,184 lakh during the Ninth Plan.

The Committee also note that these post-harvest losses are estimated to the tune of Rs. 51,500 crore and the Apex agrarian research body, viz. ICAR has hardly done anything concrete to collect and analyse the authentic data of such losses for the whole country during the previous Nine Five Year plans except for a recently made very limited area study of these losses under NATP.

The Committee, therefore, urge the Department to take up the task of collecting the authentic data on post-harvest losses of agrarian and allied sectors produce on all-India basis and make all out efforts in developing and getting implemented the technologies developed by them to check such losses on top priority basis. The technologies developed or advances made by other developed countries like Malaysia, Brazil, Thailand, etc. in preserving and processing of the variety of agricultural produce may also be studied and suitably adopted, if feasible, to avoid such a huge recurring national loss.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

As recommended by Committee, it has been decided to undertake the study on collecting, compiling and analyzing the data on post harvest losses of all the major agrarian produces through the All India Coordinated Research Project on Post Harvest Technology under *Engineering Division of the Council*. Besides, the centers are continuing to develop new technologies for checking post harvest losses and for value addition activities in the production catchments. The relevant technologies developed earlier are also being demonstrated by the 33 centres of the Post Harvest Scheme.

As suggested by the Committee the technologies developed or advances made by other developed countries like Malaysia, Brazil, Thailand etc. in preserving and processing of the different varieties of agricultural produce will be studied and suitably adopted, if found feasible, to avoid such a huge recurring national loss.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

For comments of the Committee please refer to Paragraph No. 1.18 of Chapter – I of the Report.

Recommendation No. 8

Work Analysis/Evaluation of Research conducted by ICAR Institutes

The Committee note that in pursuance of their recommendation given in the 19th Report (2001) for the first time regarding getting the worth of research work done by ICAR evaluated by an independent body of agricultural and scientific experts, the Department has appointed an Expert Committee of eminent agricultural scientists which has given its final report on 2nd August 2004. The comments from Deputy Directors General (DDGs) being the heads of the various Subject Matter Divisions (SMDs) have been invited on the recommendations of the expert Committee concerning their respective Divisions before a final view is taken by the Department. The comments of DDGs are still awaited and there is little hope of such comments being received soon.

The Committee are not satisfied with the slow pace of action and desire that the Department should complete the whole exercise within time-bound programme. Unless a target is set for the same, there is least likelihood of achieving the desired results. The Committee, therefore, desire to be apprised of the final view of the Department on the recommendations within six months from the date of the presentation of this Report to the Parliament.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

As per the Recommendation of the Committee, the action was taken by the Department to appoint an expert committee of agricultural scientists to evaluate work analysis/ research conducted by ICAR Institutes. The expert committee of

eminent agricultural scientists had submitted its final report to the Department on 2nd August, 2004. The comments from Deputy Directors General (DDGs) who are heads of Subject Matter Divisions (SMDs) were obtained on the recommendation of the expert committee concerning their respective Divisions for taking a final view by the Department. All the DDGs have agreed in toto with the recommendations made by the expert committee of eminent agricultural scientists. Few of them had also mentioned about new subjects of research being undertaken by the ICAR Institutes under their discipline. Since DARE/ ICAR are in general agreement with the recommendations made by the expert committee of eminent agricultural scientists, all the DDGs will make an annual assessment of agricultural research undertaken by various ICAR Institutes under their discipline and submit the reports for consideration of the Department. Thus, further assessment of evaluation of work analysis/ research undertaken by ICAR Institutes will be monitored by the respective DDGs who are heads of ICAR Institutes dealing with agricultural research under their respective disciplines.

Recommendation No. 10

Omissions/Accounting Errors and Vague and Inconclusive Replies

The Committee observe that the figures of the financial statements of the Department in their various budgetary documents are either omitted or at variance.

The Committee also note that the Department quite often does not furnish the information in the manner asked for or required. Obviously, there is something awry with the functioning, specially with the financial management, as it has become almost tendentious on the part of the Department to furnish incomplete information or to furnish the same in the manner they find convenient rather than in the manner precisely asked for. The Committee warn the Department to furnish correct and complete information faithfully rather than in a slipshod manner to enable the Committee and the Parliament to get a true account of their performance/achievements/shortcomings.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

While consolidating all the figures/ replies received from the concerned Institutions of ICAR some information might have been omitted inadvertently. Proper care would be taken to avoid any such omission/discrepancy/ variance. The ICAR has issued the guidelines in this regard to all the concerned divisions to adhere to the Recommendations of the Committee while furnishing the figures/ replies.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

For comments of the Committee please refer to Paragraph No. 1.21 of Chapter – I of the Report.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 11

Role of DARE/ICAR in finding solutions and providing Strategic and Scientific help to Tsunami-Affected Areas

The Committee express their profound grief over the tremendous loss of human beings and property by the devastating Tsunami waves.

The Committee note that DARE/ICAR has formulated an action plan for extending strategic and scientific/technological help to expeditiously revive/bring back to life the agrarian and allied activities of the people in Tsunami-affected areas of the nation.

The Committee, therefore, strongly urge the Department to make all-out efforts in implementing their own action plan meant for the rehabilitation of the Tsunami-survivors and extend all possible strategic and technological help to all other Ministries/Departments engaged in welfare activities in those areas.

The Committee also recommend that since DARE/ICAR has the requisite know-how to tackle the socio-environmental issues caused by devastating Tsunami, they should have a separate cell or a nominated team of required specialized scientists/work force to deal with agrarian research, education and extension issues concerning the Tsunami-affected areas on priority basis. The separate cell/work force may continue to extend their services for a period of 2-3 years or till the problems/issues are resolved and normalcy returns in the affected areas.

The Department should come forward with their additional financial requirements, if any, for tackling Tsunami-related issues and logically convince the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance as a lot of research and innovation is

called for in reclamation of degraded soil in the Tsunami-affected Coastal areas and in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The detailed survey/ studies on the after- effects and the extent of damage caused by Tsunami have been carried out by the ICAR Institutions located in the affected States. The action plans to implement various programmes have been prepared by the respective State development Departments in consultation with the concerned ICAR Institutions and State Agricultural Universities to provide necessary technical know-how. The studies also included the socio-economic aspect of the fishermen community located in the affected areas of the country. Some of the ICAR Institutions have drawn up Ad-hoc Cess Fund Project proposals for their implementation in the affected areas.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 12

Need to improve the functioning of Quinquennial Review Teams

The Committee note that Quinquennial Review Teams (QRTs) of the ICAR institutions is an important external time-tested mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of institutional research programme through the specially constituted QRTs for reviewing the work done during the past 5 years. The QRT is to be constituted 5 to 6 months prior to the 5th year and all efforts are required to be made to follow this time frame. The term of office for QRT is generally six months. Out of 13 QRTs formulated for Agricultural

Engineering Division during 2002, six QRT Reports were processed as per procedure and in some cases there was delay in receipt of the QRT reports and subsequent delay in receiving the comments of the Director/PCs. The Committee also note that next QRTs in many cases have been reportedly due in view of the gap of 6, 7 or 8 years, which in their opinion defeat the very purpose of the exercise.”

The Committee, therefore, urge the Department to look into the causes/reasons for delayed submission of each of the QRT reports and the delay in receiving the comments of the Directors/PCs and take appropriate remedial measures to contain this tendency of delays in future. The Committee would like to be apprised of the reasons for delays in each case and the action taken by the Department to check such delays in future so that all the next QRTs are constituted in the 5th year itself as required.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

As mentioned in the Recommendation regarding the delay in QRT Reports of Agricultural Engineering Division, the delay in submission of QRT Reports to Governing Body (GB) in last year occurred due to the superannuation of the DDG and ADG, Engineering. However, out of the six QRT Reports, three have been approved and accepted in the last GB meeting, two have been placed before the GB and one will be furnished for the next GB.

All appropriate measures would be taken in future for avoiding the delay in constitution of QRT as well as preparation and submission of QRT Reports. The concern of the Committee in this regard would be implemented in the right spirit.

Recommendation No. 14

Need to find Remedies for Frost-induced Jhulsa Disease in Potato

The Committee note that the farmers of Farrukhabad-Etawah-Mainpuri belt in Uttar Pradesh who have been growing potatoes suffer huge crop losses owing to frost-induced Jhulsa disease in potato which cripples the entire crop in the said belt. There have also been reports of extensive damage to soyabean crop in Madhya Pradesh. The Committee, therefore, desire the Department to examine measures for eliminating these diseases and report to the Committee about the action taken at the earliest.

The Committee would also like that a firm mechanism be devised so that all cases of large scale damage to crops due to disease are immediately reported and the ICAR scientists rush necessary relief/expert advice for containing the damage, besides putting a check on recurrence of the disease.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

Farrukhabad, Etah and Mainpuri belt of Uttar Pradesh is the leading potato belt. The potato crop suffers huge losses due to late blight particularly in those years when winter is prolonged and late blight favourable conditions develop. Besides Kufri Bahar variety of potato which is very popular with the farmers is very susceptible to late blight disease and under disease-favourable conditions succumbs to the disease. To minimize the losses from the incidence of the disease the measures required to be adopted by the farmers include: (i) Start spraying the crop with

fungicides like Dithane M-45 as soon as Central Potato Research Institute Campus (CPRIC), Modipuram issues warning regarding the appearance of the disease; (ii) the diseased tubers be sorted out and removed before and after cold storage before planting; (iii) late blight resistant variety recommended for the area be planted in place of the very susceptible variety Kufri Bahar.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

For comments of the Committee please refer to Paragraph No. 1.27 of Chapter – I of the Report.

Recommendation No. 15

Mass Destruction of the Poultry Farms in Faizabad, Rae Bareli in UP

The Committee brought to the notice of the Department a steep increase in the mortality rate of the poultry leading to mass destruction of the birds in many poultry farms of Faizabad and Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh and some parts of Haryana. In response, the Department had assured that they are investigating the entire issue and preparing a Report on it.

The Committee would like the Department to expedite the investigation and apprise them of the findings of the Report at the earliest.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

It is not true that a mass destruction of poultry farms in Faizabad, Rai Bareli in UP and some parts of Haryana was taken place, however, a large number of morbidity and mortality was recorded in poultry farms not only in these areas but also in other parts of Northern India. This was attributed to immuno-suppression associated with viral (Ranikhet Disease and Infectious Coryza) and bacterial (E.coli) infections. A Non-pathogenic Avian Influenza virus was also incriminated during the course of investigation. Vaccination against the particular diseases along with bio-security precautions reduced further morbidity and mortality.

Recommendation No. 16

Some other Complaints about the ICAR

An anxiety has been expressed in certain quarters that the busy teaching schedule comes in the way of undertaking serious and continuous research particularly in institutions having teaching responsibility; the regional centres of ICAR are not adequately cared and given adequate funds; ICAR HQs take unduly long time in replying to queries and that there is delay in release of funds and lack of leadership in some cases in achieving excellence in R&D. There have also been complaints of lack of response even to the queries of Members of Parliament by certain institutes of ICAR.

The Committee would like the DARE to examine all these issues and furnish a detailed action taken reply in three months.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The teaching schedule in ICAR Institutes is being carried out only by few Institutes. The faculties involved in teaching these courses have limited teaching load, not as per UGC teaching load pattern and do not affect undertaking serious and continuous research. On the other hand part of such research work is always shared by the students when they conduct research for their partial fulfillment of Post Graduate programmes. Students joining for such courses are great assets to such faculties in contributing towards emerging research problems. Moreover, all the scientists of these Institutes are not involved in teaching programme.

The regional centres of ICAR Institutes are generally provided with adequate funds, which are released on time. Council is stressing upon all its Institutions to attend to all the queries including the queries of Hon'ble Members of Parliament regularly with the requisite information. Regarding lack of leadership, the ICAR Institutes are trying their level best to put Senior and experienced scientists at the centres/ divisions within the available manpower in the Institutes and to the extent possible.

However, the Department will examine these issues and suitable action will be taken wherever necessary.

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

NIL

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation No. 2

Urgent need for One Time Catch up Grant to DARE/ICAR

The Committee note that the DARE has been repeatedly projecting a demand of One Time Catch-up Grant before the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance since Eighth Five Year Plan. During the Tenth Plan, the Department had projected a requirement of Rs. 1,000 crore as One Time Catch-up Grant, with a view to change the age-old agrarian research and education system, laboratories, infrastructure, equipment and machinery, etc. with the latest state-of-the art equipments/facilities. Unfortunately, the denial of long-felt and essentially needed one-time Catch-Up Grant to DARE has hamstrung our agricultural scientists and researchers. The Committee would like to caution the Government of the inherent dangers lurking in the horizon in the context of new WTO regime if the ICAR is denied necessary wherewithal for setting up state-of-the-art facilities to meet the emerging new challenges. The Committee would also like to remind the Government of the declaration made in the Presidential Address that agricultural research and extension will be another area of priority of his Government, that funding for agricultural research is being stepped up and that New Centres of Excellence will be promoted to increase the number of scientists and agri-graduates to enable the further modernization of agriculture. If the Government really feels concerned and wishes to give a thrust to agricultural research, there is no reason why the nation cannot afford to spare a one-time catch-up grant of Rs. 1,000 crore for DARE. The

Committee would like to be apprised of the response of Ministry of Finance at the action taken stage.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The recommendation of the Committee emphasizing that DARE should be made available Rs. 1000 crore as One Time Catch-up Grant was referred to Planning Commission, which responded that “A separate catch up grant may not be necessary since the requirement of funds for upgrading and updating the research facilities of ICAR’s institutions has already been taken care of while approving the proposals during Tenth Five Year Plan”

The Xth Plan SFCs / EFCs agreed to a meager amount, that too in some very specific cases, to meet the urgent need of renovation of age old infrastructure. The National Agricultural Research System comprising a large network of ICAR institutions and SAUs has dilapidated buildings, laboratories, class rooms and other farm and research related facilities as well as outdated / obsolete equipment needing large scale replacement/upgradation/modernization. The Department still requires substantial funds on this count. For this purpose Rs. 1000 crore were proposed to the Planning Commission as part of the Department’s Xth Plan proposals, but separate funds for this purpose were not allocated or provided during Xth Plan / Annual Plans, so far.

Recommendation No. 6

Urgent Need to open more need-based Research Centres/KVKs in Himalayan Region/North East States

The Committee also feel that the Department has paid scant attention to the need for establishing Research Centres/KVKs in the Himalayan Region/North East States if compared with other parts/agro-climatic zones of the country.

The Committee, therefore, urge the Department to open more need-based Research Centres/KVKs, especially in the area of Horticulture, Floriculture and Aromatic and Medicinal Plants in the Himalayan Region/North East States/Tribal Areas and educate the farmers of these areas for diversification of crops for rewarding returns. The Committee also urge the Department to look into the possibility of opening more KVKs in the 24-Parganas District in West Bengal having an area over 300 kilometres but with only one KVK and the Latur District in Maharashtra which is having no KVK at all till date.

The Committee also feel that the setting up of KVKs should not be hindered for want of requisite land, as per the extant norms, given the constraints of State Government to spare land due to increasing pressure of population and industrialization. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the criteria for sanctioning of KVKs both for the plains and the hills should be reviewed/modified so that setting up of KVKs is not hindered due to non-availability of 50 acres/33 acres of lands.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

As far as the establishment of KVK in North East States is concerned, in addition to 13 KVKs existing till the end of IX Plan, the Council has sanctioned, 23 more KVKs till February, 2005. A number of site selection committees have been constituted to examine the logistics for establishment of KVKs in the remaining districts of North East States.

There are South-24 Parganas and North -24 Parganas districts in West Bengal. The Council has already sanctioned a KVK for South 24-Parganas district. The establishment of a KVK in North 24-Parganas is in the process.

A KVK has been sanctioned for Latur district of Maharashtra during 2005-06. As per the standard procedure, a Site Selection Committee is constituted to examine the logistics for establishment of a KVK based on the proposals received from a district. Based on the recommendations/observations of the committee including the constraints of availability of land, a decision is taken for establishment of a KVK with the available land. However, adequate land is essentially needed for construction of building and development of instructional farm including demonstration unit. The site selection committee, while recommending the proposals, takes into cognizance the factors like hill areas, population density and availability of land etc.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

For comments of the Committee please refer to Paragraph No. 1.15 of Chapter – I of the Report.

Recommendation No. 13

Need to make the farmers aware about the WTO, GATT and Genetic Engineering-related Issues

The Committee note that the DARE/ICAR has brought out some publications on WTO, GATT, Genetic Engineering, etc. Since the issues related to WTO, GATT and Genetic Engineering are very sensitive, they have the scope of getting largely misunderstood by the masses engaged in agrarian and allied sectors. The Committee, therefore, feel that it is a high time for the Department to bring out easy to understand and illustrated publications in the regional and local languages of the farmers to remove the fear psychosis created in the domain of genetic engineering, about WTO and the GATT. Such publications would undoubtedly go a long way in removing unwarranted fears and misconceptions in the farming community and make them realize the true benefits they can derive from the genetically engineered seeds and the technological advances made in the field. The Committee further recommend that scientists of ICAR should have first hand and extensive interaction with the farmers and explain to them the correct position about these sensitive issues.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Directorate of Information and Publications of Agriculture of ICAR has brought out several publications in English, Hindi covering the aspects of WTO, GATT and Genetic Engineering. The Directorate has also published several popular articles in the journals i.e. Indian Farming, Indian Horticulture and Kheti (Hindi).

The information was also made available on ICAR website as well as through various exhibitions organised at different locations to farming community.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

For comments of the Committee please refer to Paragraph No. 1.24 of Chapter – I of the Report.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

Recommendation No. 1

Meagre Plan Allocations to DARE/ICAR

The Committee note that the DARE was provided Rs. 775.00 crore as Plan Allocation (BE) for 2002-2003 (the first year of the Tenth Plan), Rs. 775.00 crore BE during 2003-2004, Rs. 1,000.00 crore BE in 2004-2005 and Rs. 1,150.00 crore BE in 2005-2006 against the total Tenth Plan Allocation of Rs. 5,368 crore. These BE allocations were further reduced at RE stage every year except in 2003-2004 (the second year of the Tenth Plan) when BE and RE were the same. Plan RE in 2002-2003 went down to Rs. 725.00 crore and in 2004-2005 it was Rs. 900.00 crore. The Committee find that the above figures, constitute 0.54%, 0.52%, 0.61% and 0.54% on the Plan BE side and on the Plan RE side 0.53%, 0.55%, and 0.55% during 2002-2003, 2003-2004, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 respectively with reference to the Central Plan Outlay.

The Committee note that although the Central Plan Outlays have been increasing very steeply as is evident from the figures – Rs. 1,44,037.80 crore (2002-2003), Rs. 1,47,892.60 crore (2003-2004), Rs. 1,63,720.29 crore (2004-2005) and Rs. 2,11,253.49 crore (2005-2006), yet DARE's percentage scaled down from 0.61% in 2004-2005 to 0.54% in 2005-2006. Apparently, if such an unhealthy trend is not arrested, the allocations at RE stage may stand drastically reduced.

The Committee note that AGDP contribution to the GDP is about 22% whereas the DARE's BE/RE allocations have been merely between 0.29% to 0.33% of AGDP at current prices from 1999-2000 to 2004-2005.

While acknowledging the vital role of Agricultural Research in the strategy for reviving and encouraging agricultural diversification, the Government has done precious little to enhance the budgetary allocations to DARE, which, in the considered view of the Committee, must be to the tune of at least 1 per cent of AGDP in order to set in motion the wheel of Second Green Revolution. There is no denying the fact that India, given her huge agrarian base, could emerge as developed nation with the transformation of agricultural research which the nation can ill-afford to neglect merely for want of adequate funds.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The recommendation of the Committee that DARE should be made available 1% of AGDP as budgetary allocation, was referred to Planning Commission for necessary steps in this direction. The Planning Commission responded that "It makes Plan allocations on the basis of on-going projects and utilization of funds under the project implemented by the ICAR. It has also been liberal in supporting ICAR's new research projects and would continue to be so in the future, if the projects fall within its domain and are consistent with its mandate". The Department will continue soliciting the funding support from Planning Commission for the on-going projects as well as initiatives addressing emerging issues so that these could be funded adequately.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

For comments of the Committee please refer to Paragraph No. 1.6 of Chapter – I of the Report.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 9

Restrictions on Recruitment of Scientists/Technical Work Force of ICAR

The Committee note that as on 1st January 2005, the ICAR is reported to have 1,970 vacancies of Scientists and 762 vacancies of Technical posts. 156 positions of Scientists have to be abolished due to the restrictions of filling up $\frac{1}{3}$ rd vacancies and the Council is taking up the issue with Ministry of Finance for revival of these scientific positions. The Committee also note that the Agriculture Minister had taken up the issue with the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister on 22nd July 2004 for getting exemption from the application of 10% reduction in manpower and restriction imposed by the DOPT on filling up direct recruitment vacancies to $\frac{1}{3}$ rd so far as scientific staff is concerned and also seeking permission to fill up all the posts contained in the approved SFCs/EFCs of Tenth Plan. In response, the Finance Minister had clarified that so far no Ministry/Department has been exempted from the orders of 10% cut in manpower and filling up of only $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of vacancies in a particular year and specific proposals could be considered on merit within the ambit of existing instructions.

The Committee, aware of the importance of the scientists doing basic research work aimed at food security of the country, express their serious concern over about

2,000 posts of Scientists lying vacant. Keeping in view the gravity of the situation, they strongly feel that a scientific organization like the ICAR should not be treated at par with any other Ministry/Department.

This becomes all the more necessary in view of 156 Scientists per million of its population being engaged in agricultural research in India as compared to 450 Scientists in China, 4,900 in Japan and 4,300 in USA.

Since the Government acknowledges the vital role of agricultural research in reviving and diversifying our agriculture as reflected in its commitment made in Parliament to strengthen and modernize agricultural research, the Committee unanimously urge the Government that they should immediately remove all the restrictions imposed on the recruitment of scientists and technical staff even by relaxing the norms in this regard set for recruitment in general.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has recently recommended special dispensation for scientific posts in ICAR from the provisions of Department of Personnel & Training OM dated 16.05.2001. Keeping in view, the need to have scientific cadre posts, the Ministry of Finance has intimated the following formulations:

- **For the recruitment year 2000-01 since all 217 posts (which is the prescribed ceiling as per the OM) were filled by scientists cadre, no further filling up by scientists posts can be agreed to since then the ceiling would be exceeded; and**

- In so far as year 2001-02 is concerned, ICAR should obtain the approval of Cabinet Secretary through Secretary (Personnel) and Secretary (Expenditure) for filling up 90 posts, subject to surrender of equivalent posts from other categories.

During the last 4 years, the ICAR has surrendered/ abolished as many as 1817 posts of other categories. Now as per the formulation suggested by the MoF for revival of 90 scientific posts abolished in 2001-02 an equal number of posts of other categories have to be surrendered. However, the MoF has not agreed to revive the 66 posts of Scientist during the recruitment year 2000-2001. The suggestion of MoF for revival of 90 scientific posts of 2001-02 is being worked upon to assess the feasibility of surrendering another 90 posts of other category. Over and above 1817 such posts already abolished.

NEW DELHI;
18 January, 2006
28 Pausa, 1927 (Saka)

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Agriculture

APPENDIX I

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, THE 18TH JANUARY, 2006 AT 1100 HRS. IN ROOM, '139', FIRST FLOOR, PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE, NEW DELHI

The Committee sat from 1100 hrs. to 1330 hrs.

PRESENT

Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav – Chairman

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Hiten Barman
3. Shri Manoranjan Bhakta
4. Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava
5. Shri Khagen Das
6. Shri Raghunath Jha
7. Smt. Rupatai D.Patil Nilangekar
8. Shri Y.S.Vivekananda Reddy
9. Shri M.P. Veerendra Kumar

RAJYA SABHA

10. Smt. Mohsina Kidwai
11. Shri Harish Rawat
12. Dr.M.S.Gill
13. Shri Pyarelal Khandelwal
14. Shri Sk. Khabir Uddin Ahmed
15. Shri Bashistha Narain Singh
16. Shri Sharad Anantrao Joshi

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Shri A.K.Singh | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Hardev Singh | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 3. | Shri K.D. Muley | - | Under Secretary |
| 4. | Shri D.S. Malha | - | Under Secretary |

At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairman, welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee and requested them to deliberate on the first item of the agenda of that day, i.e., the consideration of the statement prepared by the Committee Secretariat comprising the comments/suggestions received from various organisations on 'The Food Safety and Standards Bill, 2005' and after some deliberation decided that the draft report on the said Bill may be prepared by the Secretariat and be circulated to the Committee for their consideration by the first week of February, 2006.

2. Thereafter, the Committee took up Memoranda No. 2 containing draft 13th Action Taken Report on the 9th Report on Demands for Grants (2005-06) of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation) for consideration and adoption.

[Smt. Mohsina Kidwai, MP in the chair.]

The Committee also took up Memorandum Nos. 3, 4 and 5 containing draft 14th, 15th and 16th Action Taken Reports on the 10th, 11th and 12th Reports on Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural Research and Education); Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying and Fisheries); and Ministry of Food Processing Industries for consideration and adoption.

3. The Committee then adopted the draft Action Taken Reports with certain additions/modifications as suggested by members of the Committee.

4. The Committee thereafter authorized the Chairman to present the above-mentioned Reports to the House on a date and time convenient to him.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II

(vide Para 4 of Introduction of the Report)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE 14TH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (14TH LOK SABHA)

(i)	Total Number of Recommendations	16
(vi)	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government Serial Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 & 16.	
	Total	11
	Percentage	68.75 %
(vii)	Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies Serial Nos. NIL	
	Total	Nil
	Percentage	0 %
(viii)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee Serial Nos. 2, 6 & 13.	
	Total	3
	Percentage	18.75 %
(ix)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited Serial Nos. 1 & 9.	
	Total	2
	Percentage	12.50 %