

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1815
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2014
CROP WASTE INTO BIOCHAR
Gandhi Shri Feroze Varun

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is taking various steps to initiate programmes that would educate farmers on how to turn their crop waste into biochar, which can be used as a fertilizer and boost soil fertility ;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN)

(a): Yes, Madam.

(b): Conversion of crop residues into biochar and its application in soil as soil amendment is a novel approach for sequestering atmospheric carbon into the soils, besides improving soil quality and productivity. Apart from this, the production of biochar and its application to soil may deliver immediate benefits through increase in soil water retention properties, saturated hydraulic conductivity and nutrients availability. It has led to renewed interest of agricultural scientists in this field. Research on biochar at Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), Hyderabad has indicated that biochar can be produced from stocks of cotton, redgram, maize, pigeon pea and castor. A low cost portable charring kiln has also been developed at CRIDA. Research also carried out under National Initiatives on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) revealed the usefulness of application of biochar in red soils of Andhra Pradesh. Indian Institute of Soil Science, Bhopal has initiated research to standardize optimum condition for preparation of Biochar from bio-mass of different origin and to study their effect on soil properties and crop growth. Farmers from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana those who attended the training programmes at KVK, CRIDA are being exposed to the Biochar production technology.

Government is accordingly taking various steps to create adequate awareness among farmers and to educate them under its Sub-Mission on Agricultural Extension (SMAE) under National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology (NMAET) through initiatives such as Support to States Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms (ATMA Scheme); Mass Media Support to Agricultural Extension; Setting up of Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres and Kisan Call Centre Scheme. Information is also provided to farmers through SMS Portal in the form of topical and seasonal advisories in their local language and as per their crop preferences.

(c): In view of (a) & (b) above, question does not arise.