

Title: Need to declare support price of arecanut at Rs.100/- per kg. particularly in Kerala-Laid.

SHRI T. GOVINDAN (KASARGOD) : The price of areca nut has reached the lowest in Kerala. Areca nut is the means of income of large section of farmer community. The price fall of areca nut has created a financial crisis through out the district of Kasaragod. Last year, the areca nut growers got Rs. 75/- per Kg. Now it is only Rs. 38/-. It was Rs. 160/- per Kg. 2 years ago. This serious situation compelled the private traders to withdraw from the market. The only institution to depend on areca nut is the CAMPCO, which is a co-operative institution working at Mangalore. Because of the price fall of the areca nut CAMCO also facing the serious financial crisis. Most of the farmers are unable to repay the loans they have taken from co-operative institutions and other financial institutions. There are tragic reports of suicide of farmers.

In this context, I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce to take measure to restore the areca nut price at least to the last year level and check the smuggling of areca nut into the country. I also request the Government to immediately declare a support price of Rs. 100/- per kilo of Arecanut so that the loss may be borne by the Union Government and State Governments as has already been done in Goa. Suitable directions may also be given to Commercial banks and co-operative banks through Reserve Bank of India to convert all short-term loans borrowed by Arecanut growers into medium term loans and medium term loans into long-term loans.