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Title: Need to ensure remunerative price to pepper farmers in Kerala.

SHRI P.T. THOMAS (IDUKKI): I draw the attention of the Government towards the issues being faced by pepper farmers in Kerala. It was after a long time pepper prices fetched a good price of Rs. 440 per kg. But suddenly the prices started falling sharply and the farmers are much concerned about the price. The present drought situation in Kerala has worsened the scenario and the farmers who were already struggling due to plant diseases. The production cost has also increased much due to higher wages and other input costs. Majority of pepper cultivators are small and marginal farmers depending only on this crop. It is necessary to take measures to prevent high fluctuation in the price of pepper. It has been reported that the presence of cartels in market are creating high fluctuations in prices. Forward Marketing Commission (FMC) should take strict action against this. I, therefore, urge the Government to take immediate measures to protect the interests of pepper farmers in Kerala.