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Title: Regarding subsidy on chemicals and insecticides for coconut farming.

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SHRI K. ASHOK KUMAR (KRISHNAGIRI): Hon. Speaker Madam, I thank you for giving this opportunity to speak on the subject of subsidy on chemicals used by coconut growing farmers.

Coconut crop is grown in large scale in the Southern States. Madam, 2,22,835 coconut farming families are farming coconut trees in 4.25 lakh hectares of land in Tamil Nadu. In my Krishnagiri constituency alone, in 16,000 hectares of land, there are 16 lakh coconut trees. Every year, in about 5,000 hectares of land, the coconut trees are affected by so many pests like black headed Caterpillar, Slug Caterpillar, Leaf Caterpillar, Red Palm Weevil, Bark Weevil, Bug worm, White Grub, termite and coconut mites. According to a recent survey, about 500 hectares of coconut trees are affected in Krishnagiri district alone.

These major pests affect the foliage in a large scale. Due to pest attack, the farmers would have to lose Rs.50,000 per acre for another two years as it will take at least two years for the trees to recoup. In spite of several efforts made in the past two decades to control the pests by synthetic chemical application, the anticipated results have never been achieved. It requires chemicals and pesticides to control them effectively. The cost of chemical treatment works out to be approximately Rs.2,000 per acre. For every 45 days, this treatment is given either through root feeding treatment or spraying. It is necessary to treat the unaffected coconut trees to prevent further damage. Our Puratchi Thalaivi Amma Government has taken many steps to help the poor coconut farmers.

The coconut growing farmers cannot afford the expenses on large quantity of these chemicals and pesticides. Hence, I would request the Government to provide maximum subsidy to these chemicals used by the coconut growing farmers. Thanking you.