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**Title:** Made a statement regarding initiative taken for improving the availability of fertilizers during Rabi, 1998-99.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Members of Parliament have, for some time, been speaking to me personally...(Interruptions)

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS): Mr. Chairman, Sir, we should know what statement he is making. Copies have not been circulated to us. (Interruptions)

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, copies will be made available afterwards. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please listen to the statement first. Copies are available here. They will be made available a little later.

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, the hon. Members of Parliament have, for some time, been speaking to me personally and have been raising the issue regarding availability of Diammonium Phosphate, popularly known as DAP, which is required primarily for basal dose application at the time of sowing of crops. I am myself a farmer. Therefore, I can fully appreciate that the non-availability in adequate quantity of this critical fertiliser can become serious cause of anxiety and worry for the farmers. That is why I thought I should clarify the position on the availability of DAP and other decontrolled fertilisers, besides urea, which is the only controlled fertiliser. At the same time, I thought that I would give them the details of various initiatives by the Government which will help in improving the position further.

I shall first take up the availability position of fertilisers. Urea is a controlled fertiliser. Its availability is adequate in the country. Against the assessed demand of 110 lakh MTs, the estimated availability is 126 lakh MTs. There should, thus, be no apprehension about its availability.

All other fertilisers are decontrolled including DAP, which is basically phosphatic fertiliser with 18 per cent nitrogen and 46 per cent of P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>, and Muriate of Potash. Their availability is dependent on market forces of demand and supply which operate within the parameters of the Concession Scheme of the Government of India. There were no shortages reported of DAP by any of the States during Kharif, 1998, though there were pockets in which shortages were reported of MOP during that season. MOP is entirely imported and the shortages occurred due to lower level of its imports. The availability of MOP has improved considerably since then. For Rabi season, nearly 17 lakh MTs of imports of MOP are lined up for arrival. Already seven lakh MTs have arrived and the balance is in pipeline. There are no reasons thus to worry about its availability.

As regards DAP, the States had projected requirement of 31 lakh MTs for current Rabi season. Against that, the overall availability would be 35 lakh MTs during the season. Thus, on overall basis, the availability in the country would be adequate. However, pockets of shortages had and have been reported from the States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana mainly due to the following reasons: (i) There has been bunching of imports of nearly eight lakh MTs during the months of October and November. As a result, DAP could not be pre-positioned. Further, nearly five lakh MTs have been brought to two ports, namely, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust and Vizag. This has resulted in congestion and consequent delay in movement from these ports. The problem at Vizag port was compounded by the cyclone which affected the movement of rakes for more than 20 days. This has been placed before the House earlier also. (ii) The demand for DAP has increased sharply as the area under wheat sowing has increased from three million hectare in the previous year to 4.6 million hectare as on 23rd November, 1998. The increase in area is due to unseasonal rains which occurred during the month of October.

Recognising these constraints, the Government stepped in and ordered priority berthing of DAP vessels at both the ports. At the same time, the Government ordered evacuation by rail of DAP on priority from both the plants and ports to States of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the order of priority of their requirement. I am happy to inform the Members that the entire stock of DAP of 1.50 lakh MTs

has been cleared from the JNPT. As a result of speedy evacuation, localised shortages in Punjab and Haryana were redressed. Similar action was planned at Vizag port but the intervening cyclone hampered the operation. The imported DAP at this port is meant primarily for the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Efforts have now been stepped up for evacuation of 1.30 lakh tonnes DAP on priority from this port for Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Already by 8th December, 1998, 0.96 lakh MTs have been cleared.

19.00 hrs.

Sir, I must emphasise that the production of DAP in the country during 1998-99 has been of the order of 26.63 lakh MTs which is higher than the production in the corresponding period of the previous year. The imports of DAP which are of the order of 17 lakh MTs during the year 1998, have been higher by two lakh MTs as compared to that of the previous year. It is the bunching of vessels and the increase in area under wheat during Rabi which has pushed up the peak demand. To mitigate this situation, 55,000 MTs of DAP have been specially contracted from Jordan on priority through Indian Potash Limited. The first shipment of 25,000 MTs will reach by the next week. Majority of the quantities of DAP from this shipment will be sent to UP and Rajasthan.

20.06 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on

Friday, December 11, 1998/Agrahayana 20, 1920(Saka)

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