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Title: Regarding need for strict import policy of agricultural produce.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB : The Government should respond. ...  
(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, this is a very serious issue. It relates to import of pulses. India has traditionally been the biggest producer and consumer of pulses. But in recent times, it has also become a huge importer of pulses. Most of the import of pulses is from Canada and Australia and rest of the import is from other countries including Myanmar, Russia, Ukraine and some African countries. There are certain reports of high level of Glyphosate in imported pulses.

Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum herbicide which retards plant growth by inhibiting photosynthesis and cellular growth. It is known to be highly toxic and harmful for human health. It can adversely impact immunity to several serious diseases and the absorption of mineral and vitamin nutrients, apart from disrupting protein-related functions.

Take the case of yellow peas. The quantity of imported yellow peas is higher than any other imported pulse. Yellow peas alone account for annual imports of about three million tonnes. It is commonly consumed by workers and others in low-income groups. It is also a very common street food. Many workers eat it almost every day. The health hazard posed by glyphosate-contaminated *matar* in the case of such regular consumers can

well be imagined. Hence it is important to be careful about the health impact of imported pulses.

Developed countries are known to be quite strict in protecting the health interests of their citizens while regulating and approving imports. Australia, for instance, is extremely strict. It is time now that developing countries too are equally concerned and careful about the health concerns of their citizens. As we cannot impress upon Canada, Australia and other countries to have stringent measures for testing of exported pulses, at least, we can insist on better testing before accepting import of such pulses.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to make our import policy as strict as made by developed countries to protect the health interests of their citizens while regulating and approving imports.

The hon. Minister of Food is also present here. I would request, if he can intervene in this matter and take appropriate steps. It is because, this relates to the health of our citizens, specially the poor and the working citizens of our country.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Sharad Tripathi, Shri Bhairon Prasad Mishra and Dr. Kulmani Samal are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab.

**उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री (श्री रामविलास पासवान):** महोदया, भर्तृहरि महताब जी ने जो मामला उठाया है, वह स्वास्थ्य से संबंधित है। हम निश्चित रूप से इसको दिखलाएंगे। किसी भी हालत में स्वास्थ्य से खिलवाड़ नहीं होना चाहिए।

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Ravneet Singh – not present.

Shri Balbhadra Majhi – not present.

Shri Arjun Lal Meena – not present.