

MR. SPEAKER : He is trying my patience how long I can stand.

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : The Minister is well aware of the facts; he is a knowledgeable person. Will he consider to have only one organization for this ?

MR. SPEAKER : You always struck to the question, whenever I give you the opportunity.

Next question.

Pesticides formulations

*315. DR. T. KALPANA DEVI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether about 50 technical grade pesticides and about 300 formulations are being produced in the country and if so, whether such a large number of these is warranted;

(b) whether our scientists have made any indepth studies in the matter and if so, the results thereof and follow-up action taken to keep the number of pesticides and the formulations to the bare minimum;

(c) whether the use of high quantities of pesticides is cost effective and is justified in the context of damage to environment; and

(d) whether high pesticide residues in the environment suggest that pesticides are not being degraded as claimed ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (S. BUTA SINGH) : (a) to (d). A Statement is given below.

Statement

(a) The Registration Committee has so far issued Registration Certificates for indigenous manufacture of 56 technical grade pesticides and for indigenous manufacture of 184 formulations of pesticides.

This is not considered a very large number considering the different agro-climatic

zones, the variety of crops grown in the country, the multitude of pests, diseases and weeds which can cause great loss if not controlled. It is also a very insignificant number when compared to that of the USA, an environmentally conscious country; their Environmental Protection Agency has registered 7,000 pesticides and about 11,000 formulations.

(b) Restricting the number of pesticides, in use, is not one of the goals recommended by the technical experts. On the other hand, dependence on a limited number of pesticides may prove counter-productive in the long run, as the repeated use of the same pesticides can lead to development of resistance. With this objective in view, it is always considered safe to have an alternative set of pesticides for the same group of diseases and pests. However, before recommending any pesticide for use on any crop, its efficacy, toxicity and all other relevant parameters are duly considered by the Registration Committee; and only safe pesticides are registered.

(c) and (d). The use of pesticides in India, at present, is not excessive as compared to many developed and developing countries. While per hectare consumption of pesticides in India is about 295 gr., it is over 13 kg. in Italy, over 12 kg. in Hungary, over 9 kg. in Japan and over 6 kg. in Republic of Korea. In India, only the need-based and judicious application of pesticides is being recommended; and this is very much cost effective and justified to prevent losses to the crops due to pests, diseases and weeds and to sustain production of food, fibre, fodder and other crops keeping in view the environmental and ecological balance. The strategy followed by the Government in Plant Protection is Integrated Pest Management in which genetic, mechanical and biological methods are also used in addition to chemical methods.

With the judicious use of pesticides and at low level it is used in India, no significant damage to environment can take place. Before registering the pesticides, all aspects are taken into consideration. The Central Insecticides Board before approving a pesticide for use in the country, also satisfies itself about all its parameters and also indicates

the minimum intervals between application of the pesticides and the harvesting. The Government is keeping a very close watch on the residues of pesticides in the environment. Agencies like Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Agricultural Universities are engaged in residue research. ICAR has sanctioned an All India Coordinated Research Project on Pesticides Residues to obtain reliable data in all agro-climatic zones in the country. Studies on pesticide-residues have revealed problem of residues only in case of DDT and BHC.

Degradation of pesticides is a relative term and over the years there has been a shift in the use from relatively persistent pesticides to more bio-degradable pesticides. These pesticides do not persist or leave any significant amount of residues in the environment under good agricultural practices.

The Central Government have already constituted an Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. N. Banerjee to examine the pesticides which are either banned or restricted for use in other countries but continue to be in use in India. It will also be making its recommendations regarding safer substitutes for highly toxic and persistent pesticides.

DR. T. KALPANA DEVI : I would like to know whether the Government is reducing or limiting the formulations of pesticides, just as it is being planned for drugs.

S. BUTA SINGH : We are regularly reviewing the situation of pesticides and we continue to take corrective measures. There are a large number of insecticides which are not used in our country as they are considered to be harmful.

DR. T. KALPANA DEVI : What are the levels of pesticides in human bodies as a result of consumption of fruit and vegetables from those crops where insecticides and pesticides are sprayed ?

S. BUTA SINGH : This is a very technical question and I am sorry that I do not have the statistical data on this. But I will definitely take up this question and I will

ask some specialists to give me the answer. Then I will communicate it to the Hon. member.

SHRI AJAY MUSHRAN : Is the Hon. Minister aware of the fact that there have been a large number of complaints about the ineffectiveness of pesticides and insecticides ? Because of the spurious nature of these pesticides, and insecticides, these are adversely affecting the farmers who are growing gram. The caterpillars are not dying with these pesticides and insecticides that are issued to them. If the Minister is aware of this, would he be kind enough to intimate what action, immediate and far-reaching, he is contemplating to take ?

S. BUTA SINGH : Due to continuous use of pesticides or insecticides, the pests also develop resistance and this particular problem about gram which the Hon. Member is mentioning, has been reported to us. We will get tests done from the laboratories. Also, we keep on advising the State Governments about the ineffectiveness of particular insecticides. There has been a report about adulteration of pesticides and insecticides. We will take suitable measures as and when a case is brought to our notice.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : You must be quite vigilant, because the people who manufacture spurious medicines do not spare even the human beings.

[English]

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : Is the Government aware of the expert recommendation that synthetic pyri-theroids should not be applied in regard to food crops and while it is so, synthetic pyri-theroids are extensively and excessively used in respect of pulses and other food crops ? This is having very adverse impact on other crops like cotton and tobacco which are existent in this field. Will the Government take immediate steps for banning the application of Synthetic Pyri-theroids at least on these food crops ?

S. BUTA SINGH : This particular pesticide is being used on the fodder crop and it

is not permitted on a large scale on the fresh vegetables and fruits. But in case the Hon. Member has some case in his mind, I would look into it.

Mobile soil testing vans

*316. SHRI V. TULSIRAM : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Indian Potash Ltd. has fabricated mobile soil testing vans;

(b) if so, the details of the facilities these vans are expected to provide to the farmers in the country and the extent to which the guidance so given will be helpful to the farmers;

(c) whether such vans have also been provided in the State of Andhra Pradesh and if so, how many and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the time by which such vans are expected to be provided to Andhra Pradesh ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (S. BUTA SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir. Indian Potash Limited has fabricated three mobile soil testing vans which were commissioned in February, 1986.

(b) These mobile soil testing vans are fitted with the latest equipment to analyse soil samples for providing specific fertilizer recommendations at farmers' door steps. These vans also have quick fertilizer testing kits for advising the farmers regarding the purity of fertilizers. Audio-Visual facilities are also provided in the vans to educate the farmers on the latest technology of crop production through efficient use of fertilizers. The guidance given through this service will help the farmers to increase the efficiency of fertilizer use for achieving higher productivity per unit of fertilizer.

(c) and (d). Indian Potash Limited has not provided any such van to the State of Andhra Pradesh. However, four mobile soil testing vans are already operating in Andhra Pradesh.

[Translation]

SHRI V. TULSIRAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Minister has stated in his reply that Indian Potash Limited has fabricated mobile soil testing vans. I want to know from the Hon. Minister which company has produced the vehicles that are being used in Andhra Pradesh, in how many villages the soil testing has been done and the number of farmers covered under these tests ? Has the production increased after the farmers were given consultancy; if so, to what extent ?

S. BUTA SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no doubt that the farmers have benefited a lot wherever the soil tests have been conducted. Information is available with us in respect of each crop as to how much the yield has increased. At present, four vans have been pressed into service in Andhra Pradesh. However, I do not have information about the name of company that has produced these vehicles. As of now, the soil testing facilities in the country are not sufficient—I admit it. This facility should be increased and efforts are continuing in this direction. Six more laboratories are being set up in different zones during the Seventh Five Year Plan so that this facility could be extended to more and more farmers in the country. By doing so, fertilizers can also be put to maximum use and at the same time the farmers can be informed on the spot about the deficient elements in their respective soils. Thus, this facility is very beneficial and the Government are giving full attention to it.

SHRI V. TULSIRAM : My second supplementary is that how this test is being conducted and what the farmers are required to do for it ? Supposing I am a farmer and I want my soil to be tested, then what am I required to do, what is the procedure for this and whether some fee is also charged for it; if so, how much ?

S. BUTA SINGH : This is a free service and no fee is charged for it. Small pamphlets are distributed among the farmers which carry the procedure to be adopted by the farmers. It is announced through the extension services, Gram Panchayats, Block Development Agencies well in advance which areas will be covered by the mobile vans,