

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATION AND FARMERS WELFARE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2868
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 13TH March, 2018

PEST ATTACKS ON CROPS

2868. KUMARI SHOBHA KARANDLAJE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether after an erratic Monsoon, farmers in nine States are reeling under severe pest attacks and if so, the names of the affected States;
- (b) whether most States in the country lose 5 to 10 per cent of crops to pest attacks every year and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether pest outbreaks are more severe now because of the use of Hybrid Paddy along with fertilizers with high urea and ammonia content and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether it is a fact that climate change, along with the indiscriminate use of pesticides and breaking away from the traditional farming practices have also increased pest outbreaks in the country; and
- (e) if so, the steps taken / being taken to control sudden surge in pest attacks in the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a): As per the Scientific literature, healthy plants having sufficient nutritional requirement & moisture requirement generally show some level of resistance to pests & diseases. Plants predisposed to moisture stress will be vulnerable to pest & disease attack. During 2017 severe attack of following pests were reported:

- (i) Pink bollworm was reported in Cotton crop from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh & Gujarat.
- (ii) Armyworm (*Mythimna separata*) attack in paddy was reported from Odisha & Assam and in Maize crop from Karnataka.
- (iii) Brown Plant Hopper (BPH) attack was reported from Odisha in Rice crop.

In other states, no major pest outbreaks were reported.

Contd...2/-

(b): Estimations suggest that on an average, crop losses vary from 10-30% annually due to weeds, pests and diseases across the country (according to various reports/ publications). However, losses due to pest and diseases are not static and vary from year to year depending upon the prevailing agro-climatic conditions (temperature, humidity, rainfall) and other predisposing factors such as susceptible crop variety, Agronomic practices etc.

(c): In case of paddy, it is well documented that use of high Nitrogen fertilizers leads to exposure & succulent vegetative growth of plants which are favourable for Brown Plant Hopper (BPH). Hence for the management of BPH, it is recommended to use low nitrogenous fertilizers or slow releasing nitrogenous fertilizers.

(d): Increased pest outbreak can be attributed to various factors. Indiscriminate use of pesticides is one of them, as pest develops resistance against the pesticide and may cause resurgence of pest. Indiscriminate use of pesticides also affects the environment, beneficial organisms such as pollinators, predators & parasitoids found in the crop, non-target vegetation, soil & air.

(e): The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is implementing "Strengthening and Modernization of Pest Management Approach in India" (SMPMA) Scheme through 35 Central Integrated Pest Management Centres (CIPMCs) established across the country with an aim to promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an ecological approach which aims to keep pest population below economic thresholds level by employing available alternate pest control strategies and techniques viz. preventive measures, cultural, mechanical and biological control with greater emphasis on usage of bio-pesticides and pesticides of plant-origin like Neem formulation etc. CIPMCs inter alia, produce biological agents for release in the fields, conserve natural bio-control agents, promote bio-pesticides as an alternative to chemical pesticides and advocate judicious and safe use of chemical pesticides as a last resort. In addition, these CIPMCs organizes Farmers Field Schools (FFSs) to sensitize farmers on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. In addition, Package of practices for control of pests and diseases in 87 crops have been revised to include techniques to reduce dependence on chemical pesticides and encourage use of bio-pesticides and other alternative plant protection measures. Timely advisories are being issued by the Ministry to the State Government disseminating, inter alia management strategies to prevent pests attack. Furthermore, the State Governments through various forums such as Zonal Conferences and National Conference are requested to exhort their extension functionaries to educate and impart training to farmers on efficacious and sustainable pest management strategies /approaches and to maintain constant surveillance.
