

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.398
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

LOCUST ATTACKS

398. SHRI HARISH DWIVEDI:
DR. DNV SENTHILKUMAR S.:
SHRI SHRIRANG APPA BARNE:
SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL:
SHRI THIRUNAVUKKARASAR SU:
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
SHRI DEEPAK BAIJ:
SHRI SANJAY SADASHIVRAO MANDLIK:
SHRIMATI MALA ROY:
SHRI MANICKAM TAGORE B.:
SHRI A.K.P. CHINRAJ:
SHRI S. JAGATHRAKSHAKAN:
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:
SHRI KULDEEP RAI SHARMA:
SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL:
DR. AMOL RAMSING KOLHE:
SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:
DR. SUBHASH RAMRAO BHAMRE:

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

- (a) whether there are widespread locust attacks in different parts of the country causing widespread crop losses to farmers and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (b) whether the Government has assessed the damage caused by locust to farmers who are already facing lot of problem due to COVID-19 pandemic especially the total hectares of crops damaged and if so, the details thereof, crop and State-wise;
- (c) whether any talks have been held with neighbouring countries from where the locusts have originated, if so, the details thereof and its outcome;
- (d) whether the Government is planning to give any compensation or relief for farmers who have been affected by locust attacks and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether farmers in locust affected areas in the country have been educated or trained about the locusts attacks, if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the other preventive measures/action plan taken by the Government to stop recurrence of the situation or effectively control the future attacks of the locust in the coming months?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) & (b): During 2020-21, the locust incursions were reported in 10 States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Haryana and Uttarakhand, where operations were undertaken in coordination with State Governments for locust control.

State Governments of Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Bihar have reported no crop losses in their States. However, Government of Rajasthan has reported crop damage of 33% and more due to locust attack in 2234.92 hectare area in Bikaner, 140 hectare in Hanumangarh and 1027 hectare area in Sri Ganganagar. Government of Haryana has reported below 33% crop loss in approx. 6166 hectare area, Government of Madhya Pradesh has reported 10 percent loss in soybean crop in 4400 ha in Damoh district. State Government of Maharashtra has reported below 33% crop loss in 805.8 hectare area in Nagpur, Bhandara, Gondiya and Amravati districts. State Government of Uttarakhand has reported a loss of 2 hectare (5% loss) in Pithoragarh district. State Government of Rajasthan has further issued instructions for conducting survey to estimate crop losses. Uttar Pradesh government also issued orders to field units for submitting the status of crop losses.

(c): A High Level virtual meeting on Desert Locust in South-West Asian countries was held on 11 March 2020, with representatives of four member countries (Afghanistan, India, Iran and Pakistan) and the Plant Protection Division of FAO, Rome participated in the meeting. Subsequently, 24 virtual meetings of technical officers of member countries have been held so far via skype for sharing of strategic information on actual status, movement and control of locust in member countries.

Further, feedback from Kenya and Ethiopia about Locust status in their respective countries has been received through Ministry of External Affairs in May and June. On the basis of these feedbacks, strategies were chalked out for locust preparedness and control.

(d) Pest attack is notified as a natural disaster by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and States can undertake relief operations under State Disaster Response Fund as per established procedure and the norms for assistance.

Till now no State Government has reported distribution of relief to the farmers affected by locust attack.

Crop losses of farmers due to Locust attacks are also covered under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). The yield losses are assessed through Crop Cutting Experiments and compensation are given to insured farmers as per the provisions of the scheme.

(e): Yes, training programmes and mock drill operations were conducted by Locust Circle Offices for the State Extension Officers and farmers of Rajasthan and Gujarat. In addition, Central Integrated Pest Management Centres also conducted awareness programmes for State Extension Officers in the States of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Chhattisgarh.

(f): Capabilities of Locust Circle Offices were strengthened through the following-

- To strengthen locust control capabilities, additional 60 equipments were procured and presently 104 control teams with spray equipment mounted vehicles were utilized for ground control.
- 55 vehicles were procured to strengthen ground control potential.
- More than 200 Central Government personnel were deployed in locust control operations.
- Drones were used for locust control for the first time in the world after finalizing protocols and one Bell 206-B3 helicopter was also used for locust control by aerial spraying.
- The Indian Air Force, Mi17 helicopter with customized aerial spray equipment was used for aerial spray.
- Ministry of Home Affairs has included admissibility of hiring of vehicles, tractors with spray equipments for spraying of plant protection chemicals for pest control; hiring of water tankers; and purchase of plant protection chemicals for locust control under new norms of assistance under State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). This has also facilitated the State in their locust control operations.
- Under Sub-mission on Agriculture Mechanization assistance of Rs. 2.86 crores for 800 tractors mounted spray equipments was sanctioned to Rajasthan. Under RKVY sanction of Rs. 14 crores for hiring of vehicles, tractors and for purchase of pesticides has also been issued.
- Gujarat States has been sanctioned Rs. 1.80 crores under RKVY for capacity enhancement for locust control.
- Under Sub-mission on Agriculture Mechanization assistance of 2.20 crore has been sanctioned for purchase of tractors and spray equipments for Uttar Pradesh.
