GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1031
TO BE ANSWERED ON 8Th FEBRUARY, 2022

BANANA CULTIVATION IN BIHAR

1031. SHRI JANARDAN SINGH SIGRIWAL:

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

(a) whether the Government had given its approval to start research work at Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agriculture University, Pusa in Bihar in order to encourage farming of Banana and to increase its production;

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof;

(c) whether the Government had also given approval to open Banana Research Centre at Goraul of Vaishali district of Bihar and if so, the present status thereof;

(d) whether the average production of banana in Bihar is very low compared to that of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu and if so, the details and reasons therefor; and

(e) the other measures being taken by the Government to increase its production keeping in view there is plenty of potential for banana production in Bihar?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
कृषि और किसान कल्याण मंत्री (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) Yes Sir. The Research work on Banana is carried out in Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agriculture University (DRPCAU), Pusa through the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-All India Coordinated Research Project on Fruits (ICAR-AICRPF). Further, the University also encourages research work related to banana farming and by-product utilisation through several University sponsored projects. An Advanced Research Centre on Wealth from Waste has been established by the University to facilitate research activities related with by-product utilisation of banana.

(b) The ICAR-AICRP on Fruits has adopted banana as a mandate crop in DRPCAU, Pusa (the then RAU, Pusa) since 1987. The package of practices for growing bananas under the agroclimatic conditions of Bihar has been standardized and several technologies have been developed and validated for Bihar conditions. A few of the major technologies developed are:

i. Banana genotypes across and outside India, are conserved and around 20 best performing varieties have been recommended for commercial cultivation by the farmers;

ii. For production of low-cost planting materials, the macro-propagation technology has been validated at the centre and has been recommended for adoption;

iii. The management of major diseases *viz*. *Fusarium* wilt in banana has been released by ICAR-AICRP on Fruits and the University for the farmers.

(c) Research Centre at Goraul of Vaishali District of Bihar is already funtioning as Banana Research Station under DRPCAU, Pusa.

(d) The average productivity of banana in Bihar (40.29 tonnes/ha) is over and above the national average of 35 tonnes/ha (2019-20 second advanced estimates of NHB). It is slightly lower than the average productivity of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

This may be due to the following reasons:

i. Prevalence of disease known as 'Fusarium wilt TR-4' in the banana fields of Katihar and Purnea districts of Bihar;
ii. Most of the banana growers grow tall cultivars and the average bunch yield in tall cultivar is lesser as compared to the Dwarf Cavendish clones;
iii. Many of the farmers grow banana as a perennial crop. In the Vaishali area, around 50 years old banana fields are existing and poorly managed fields encourage several diseases and pest infestation;
iv. Most of the banana farmers of the state are economically weak and they possess smaller size land holding. This does not favour adoption of scientific methods for commercial cultivation.

(e) The ICAR-National Research Centre for Banana (ICAR-NRCB), Tiruchirapalli has conducted many training programs on the latest production technology in two to three locations in Bihar to promote banana cultivation and at the same time, to take care against Fusarium wilt disease caused by Foc TR-4. The ICAR-AICRP-Fruits unit of Dr. Rajendra Prasad CAU located at Pusa, Bihar also has taken up many trainings on the latest developments in banana for Bihar farmers. Moreover, the ICAR NRCB has taken up following activities to overcome Foc TR-4 in Bihar:

i. Identified five different consortia of bioagents for the management of Fusarium wilt disease Tropical Race 4 (TR-4) in Bihar and these are being tested in large scale at Katihar district of Bihar;
ii. Identified 5 different native Cavendish group of bananas resistant/tolerant to Fusarium wilt disease which are being mass multiplied for the multilocation trial in Bihar;
iii. Exotic varieties of more than 100 accessions are evaluated against Fusarium wilt disease at Falka block of Katihar district;
iv. Creation of awareness through mass media, supply of posters, leaflets etc and conducting meetings have been undertaken and these are followed in the Katihar and Purnea districts which are affected by Fusarium wilt TR-4.

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