

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1255
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 03RD DECEMBER, 2024

IMPACT OF MOISTURE CONTENT ON ARECANUT FARMING

1255. SHRI B Y RAGHAVENDRA:

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

- (a) whether the Government has reviewed the impact of the FSSAI's 7 per cent maximum moisture content requirement on the viability and profitability of Arecanut Farming, particularly for growers in regions like Karnataka where climate and natural drying processes make compliance challenging;
- (b) If so, whether the Government intends to re-evaluate this limit to better align with the natural moisture variations in Arecanut and to consider the impact of weather and storage conditions on moisture retention;
- (c) whether any consultations have been conducted with agricultural experts, farmer representatives, or industry stakeholders on the implications of the 7 per cent moisture cap;
- (d) whether the Government has considered revising the moisture content requirement to more feasible standard that would alleviate financial strain on Arecanut farmers and if so, the proposed timeline for such a revision; and
- (e) the steps that the Government is taking to ensure fair standards for Arecanut quality that safeguard farmers interests while meeting food safety objectives?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री (SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) & (b): Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has not carried out any impact assessment to review the 7% maximum moisture content requirement for Arecanut. However, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) - Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasaragod had evaluated arecanut samples collected from different places which were analyzed for moisture and water activity in Arecanut. For storage of arecanut under dry condition, moisture content of 11% with corresponding water activity of 7.1 was found reasonably safe.

(c): FSSAI's scientific panel comprising of experts from various research institutes have under taken technical deliberations on this matter. Further, ICAR-CPCRI, Kasaragod, Kerala and Directorate of Arecanut & Spices Development (DASD), Calicut, Kerala have also held consultation meetings with agriculture experts, farmers representatives and industry stakeholders.

(d) & (e): No such amendment is under consideration of FSSAI presently.
