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

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 34
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02ND DECEMBER, 2025

CROP LOSS FACED BY ARECANUT FARMERS

*34. SHRI RAJMOHAN UNNITHAN:

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

(a) Whether the Government is aware of the severe crop loss faced by arecanut farmers in Kasaragod district of Kerala due to Leaf Spot disease; and

(b) If so, whether any steps have been taken to compensate affected farmers, promote disease-resistant varieties through ICAR, and announce a relief package for border-district growers?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री (SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN)

(a) to (b): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) & (b) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. 34 DUE FOR REPLY ON 02ND DECEMBER, 2025 REGARDING CROP LOSS FACED BY ARECANUT FARMERS.

(a): The State Government of Kerala constituted a Task Force Committee to analyse the situation of 'Arecanut cultivation in Kasaragod district' with ICAR-Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod (ICAR-CPCRI) as a member. The team visited different parts of the Kasaragod District and estimated the loss in yield ranging from 5% to 20% due to leaf spot disease.

Further, the Integrated Pest Management-cum-Locust Division of Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine & Storage (DPPQ&S) assesses the situation of pest and diseases by conducting survey & surveillance through its 47 Central Integrated Pest Management Centres (CIPMCs) & Locust-cum- Central Integrated Pest Management Centres (LCIPMCs) situated across the country. Based on the surveys conducted by CIPMC Ernakulam, the reported incidence of leaf spot disease in Arecanut plantations in Arecanut growing areas of Kerala especially in Kasaragod district has been observed at trace intensity levels with no report of disease above economic threshold levels (ETL). Details in this regard are at Annexure-I.

However, the CIPMC continuously monitors the plantations of Arecanut through survey & surveillance in major Arecanut growing areas of Kerala to ensure early detection and appropriate management of the pests and diseases of Arecanut.

(b): The overall development of arecanut at the national level is coordinated by the Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development (DASD), Calicut, a subordinate office under the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. To address the challenges faced by arecanut farmers, the DASD implemented the following programmes /schemes for dissemination of improved technologies to manage the crop:

- Promotion of multi-species cropping in existing arecanut gardens by establishing frontline demonstration (FLD) plots and conducting training programmes
- Establish large scale demonstration on community-based management of leaf spot disease (LSD) in arecanut across 10 LSD affected arecanut growing taluks in Karnataka from 2024-25 in the selected farmers' fields of the affected area. This program covers 50 ha, with 5 ha in each taluk, aiming to popularize the recommended scientific management measures for control of LSD.

- Establish FLDs to demonstrate the effect of the new fungicide Mandipropamid in management of fruit rot disease in arecanut in selected areas of Kerala, Karnataka.
- Establish FLDs to popularize the use of EPN (Entomopathogenic Nematode) in management of root grubs in Arecanut.
- Frontline Demonstration on dwarf hybrid varieties of Arecanut
- FLDs to demonstrate the effect of plastic mulching in YLD management in Arecanut
- A Temperature and Relative Humidity Controller Unit has been given to ICAR-CPCRI for studying relationship between weather and leaf spot disease of Arecanut to help in disease predictions.

Government intervention to manage diseases like Leaf Spot Disease (LSD) and Yellow Leaf Disease (YLD) The major challenge in arecanut cultivation that seriously affecting the farming community is the spread of diseases like Koleroga, Yellow Leaf Disease (YLD) and Leaf Spot Disease (LSD). In 2006-07, Government of India sanctioned an amount of Rs 1170.83 lakhs to Kerala State for the rehabilitation/ replanting programme of the Yellow Leaf Disease (YLD) affected arecanut gardens in an area of 9541 ha. In 2022, arecanut gardens in Karnataka was severely affected by LSD.

To address this issue, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India constituted a National Scientific Committee (NSC) on Arecanut on 20th October 2022 to look into the diseases like YLD & LSD and other issues of arecanut in Karnataka. The NSC submitted its final report, with recommendations for control of LSD through proper nutrition and fungicide 4 sprays. For YLD, a long-term strategy of identifying YLD tolerant palms and its multiplication through tissue culture have been chalked out. The NSC recommended following measures to manage LSD in arecanut.

a. 2ND DECEMBER, 2025**Phytosanitation**: Removal and burning of severely infected lower leaves wherever possible.

b. Fungicide Spraying:

i. The Bordeaux mixture (1%) can be sprayed on the leaves while spraying on the bunches during monsoon (July-August).

ii. If the disease is observed during September-October, first round of spray with Propiconazole 25% EC (1 ml per litre of water) Or Tebuconazole (1ml per litre) may be sprayed, followed by second round spray of Propineb

70% WP (2 g per litre of water) at 25-30 days depending on the disease severity. Surfactants/ stickers may be added with the solution @ 100 ml in 200 lit solution.

c. **Nutrient management:** Soil test-based balanced nutrient management should be followed to maintain overall plant health and speedy recovery of the affected palms.

Based on the recommendations of the NSC, Government of India sanctioned Rs 3700 lakhs to State Horticulture Mission (SHM), Karnataka in 2024-25 for the management of Leaf Spot Disease in Arecanut, as per their detailed project report submitted to Horticulture Division, DA&FW. SHM Karnataka has also been requested to include the remaining funds required for management of LSD in the Annual Action Plan of 2025-26. DASD Established large scale demonstration on community-based management of leaf spot disease in arecanut across 10 LSD affected arecanut growing taluks in Karnataka from 2024-25 in the selected farmers' fields of the affected area. This program covers 50 ha, with 5 ha in each taluk, aiming to popularize the recommended scientific management measures for control of LSD. An amount of Rs 6.316 Crore has been sanctioned for this programme for a period of three years.

Further, in order to provide financial assistance to farmers for crop losses arising from adverse weather deviations, the Government of India in collaboration with State Government has been implementing Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS), a central sector index based crop insurance programme. Arecanut in Kasaragod district is already covered under the scheme, which includes protection against Pests. During FY 2022-23 & 2023-24, 2620 number of farmers applications were enrolled under the scheme and claims of Rs. 3,00,75,802 have been settled in favour of 2618 applications of Arecanut farmers in Kasaragod district. For the year FY 2024–25, the number of applications enrolled under Arecanut crop in Kasaragod district has seen a substantial increase compared to the previous year.

Annexure-I

Details of special survey/surveillance carried in Arecanut Crop by DPPQS, DA&FW

Year	**Crop**	**District**	**Area Surveyed (special survey)**	**Disease**	**Intensity of Disease**
2023-24	Arecanut	Kasargod	200	Leaf yellowing (physiological disorder)	Trace
2025-26	Arecanut	Kasargod	161	Leaf yellowing (physiological disorder)	Trace
				Fruit rot (Phytophthora palmivora)	Trace
				Leaf spot/leaf rot (colletotrichum gloeosporioides)	Trace

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