

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO B/397

**B/397 The Honourable Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix
(Mr. Soodhun)**

To ask Dr the Honourable Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries: -

Whether, in regard to the decrease in the production of food crops by 11.3% from 106,002 tonnes in 2006 to 94,822 tonnes in 2007, as indicated in the latest report of the Central Statistics Office, he will state if his Ministry has examined the causes therefore?

REPLY

Mr Speaker, Sir,

The production of food crops, i.e vegetables and fruits, depends to a large extent, on prevailing climatic conditions as well as other factors such as extent of land under cultivation, irrigation facilities, quality of seeds, fertilizer usage and good agricultural practices.

2. According to the provisional Foodcrops Statistics for year 2007, there has been a reduction in area harvested by 9.4 per cent, i.e 671 ha less, and a decrease in production by 11.5%, i.e 12,183 tons less, compared to year 2006. AREU attributes the drop in production mainly to the passage of tropical cyclone Gamede on 24/25 February 2007 which had caused serious damage to our agriculture. As a result of that damage, there has been a significant decrease in production of food crops from February to May 2007.

3. The decrease in production of different crops registered in 2007 is as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|
| i. For creepers | - | 19%, i.e 5,432 tonnes |
| ii. For banana | - | 20.8%, i.e 2,237 tonnes |

iii. For tomato - 30.5%, i.e 4,513 tonnes

4. The production of voehm, lettuce and ladies finger dropped by 40%, 27.5% and 23.3% respectively.

5. On the other hand, there was an increase in the production of cauliflower (+308 t, +23.3%), pineapple (+844t, +15,2%), onion (+593t, +13%) and ginger (+284t, +28%) and this was attributed to an increase in area planted/harvested.

6. I would, however, like to point out that no significant shortage in supply of food crops on the market was observed in 2007 as arrangements were made for the importation of some vegetables like carrot, cabbage and bean to meet demand of consumers.

7. Government is encouraging planters to engage in vegetable production by making additional land available through the 207 Arpents at Rose Belle, 100 Arpents by SIT and 100 Arpent by MSPA. Additional state lands have been released to foodcrop growers and the Federation of Cooperatives for vegetable production on the Ex Tea Lands and for potato cultivation at Cote d'Or respectively. State lands from Government Stations have been released at Bois Marchand, Richelieu and Plaisance and Farmers in these plots are being encouraged to produce vegetable seeds under the Quality Declared Seed Scheme, to cater for the demand for seeds on the local market.

8. Government is taking all necessary measures to boost foodscrops production. However, there exists unfortunately no measure to counter the effects of natural calamities such as cyclone, flood or drought.