

Parliamentary Question No B/603

B/603 The Honourable Fifth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix
(Mr Soodhun)

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

Whether, as announced in the Government programme, he will state if he has taken steps to supply fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides to small planters at more competitive rates?

REPLY

Mr Speaker Sir,

Paragraph 93 of the Government Programme 2005-2010 states that Government will cause the State Trading Corporation (STC) to supply fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides to the local market to enable planters to obtain these products at more competitive rates. My Ministry has already provided a list of commonly used agro chemicals to the State Trading Corporation for appropriate action.

2. I have been informed that the STC has contacted various potential suppliers including the State Trading Corporation of India for this purpose. Quotations and samples of some 8 products were received from the latter. However, the prices have been found to be relatively higher than those being offered on the local market. Furthermore, the existing operators on the local market have a commercial edge over the STC which would have to import the finalized products itself at a high price.

3. I am advised by the Ministry of Industry, SME and Commerce and Cooperatives that the price of fertilizers was last fixed on 6 August 2004 and no decision has yet been taken to place fertilizers under the maximum price mark-up regime.

4. I have also been informed by the Small Planters Welfare Fund (SPWF) that its Board has considered the possibility of importing fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. In this regard, several foreign suppliers have been contacted for indicative prices following which a tender exercise would be carried out, depending on price indication.

5. Furthermore, I wish to inform the House that presently small sugar planters cultivating up to 10Ha benefit from a 50% refund up to a maximum of Rs 3,519 per hectare on the cost of fertilizer at planting. Under the Field Operations and Regrouping project, sugar planters cultivating up to 25 hectare, benefit from the supply of fertilizers and herbicides free of cost at planting.