

PQ B/573 The Honourable Second Member for Grand Baie and Poudre D'Or (**Mr Raghoobur**)

To ask the Honourable Minister of Agro- Industry and Food Security-

Whether, in regard to food security, he will state the initiatives undertaken for the promotion thereof over the past three years indicating the corresponding increase in the production of agricultural products in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues?

Madam Speaker,

As indicated in my reply to PQ B/368 of 03 May 2016, several initiatives have been undertaken by my Ministry to promote food security in our country.

In this respect, a panoply of support including training are provided to our planters and breeders through the different schemes operated by my Ministry, the FAREI, Small Farmers Welfare Fund and AMB, with a view to promoting and boosting our local agricultural production. These include:

- (a) Increase in grant for sheltered farming from Rs 250, 000 to Rs 400, 000, to promote the shift from open field to protected farming.
- (b) Facilities for land mechanization, procurement of seeds, as well VAT exemption on the purchase of agricultural equipment and tools.
- (c) Promotion of agro forestry as a new farming system. A farm to that effect has already been set up at Petit Sable.
- (d) Establishment of bee reserve zones around the island to promote pollination and increase our food crop production.
- (e) Research and Development programmes to ensure that farmers have access to high yielding crop varieties.

- (f) Setting up of a Fruit Fly Rearing facility for the rearing of sterile flies to combat harmful flies.
- (g) Development of a wide range of value-added products and agro processing to minimize post-harvest losses and food wastage.
- (h) Recently a software application named 'Mokaro' has been developed to provide planters with real time information for better planning of their plantation to avoid gluts and food loss.

Regarding the Livestock Sector, my Ministry has initiated the following measures over the last three years to boost up production:

1. Setting up of a goat/sheep reproduction farm at Belle- Mare by FAREI.
2. Setting up of a heifer farm at Melrose and a sheep reproduction farm at Salazie.
3. Setting up of a Turkey Quarantine Unit at Plaine Magnien and promotion of turkey rearing at commercial level.
4. Cash incentives are given to breeders for the rearing of heifers up to lactating stage and purchase of imported breeding animals, equipment and renovation/construction of farm buildings and fodder production, etc.
5. Promotion of Quail farming for commercial purposes.

I must say that these measures are contributing to consolidate our food security level. Indeed, an increase has been noted in our food crop production from 2015 to 2018. This figure which stood at 102,006T is estimated to be 118,607T for 2018.

As for Rodrigues, I am informed that the food crop production which was 2679T in 2015 reached 3112T in 2017.

With the setting up of the 100 Farms, as announced in the Budget Speech 2019-2020, we are expecting a further increase in the production of some selected crops which are usually imported.