

CLONE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NORTH-EAST INDIA AND EVALUATION OF COMMERCIAL YIELD OF RRIM 600

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The study comprehensively analyses the recommendation of various natural rubber (NR) clones over the years for the north-eastern region of India. It also evaluates the yield realized by the small NR growers of Tripura state where RRIM 600 occupies more than three-fourth of the area under NR cultivation in Tripura. The average yield of RRIM 600 was 1490 kg ha⁻¹ year⁻¹ over 22 years of tapping in small grovers' fields in Tripura. This was higher than yields realised by the estate sector for the same clone in the traditional rubber growing region in India.

Key words: Commercial yield, *Hevea brasiliensis*, Natural rubber, North-East India, RRIM 600, Tripura

INTRODUCTION

Natural rubber (NR) occupies a significant role in the economy of Tripura. NR was introduced in Tripura during the 1960's and presently it occupies more than seven per cent of the State's geographical area. Although Tripura is the second largest NR cultivated state in India with respect to area, productivity lags behind that in the traditional tracts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Tripura with sub-tropical warm humid climate lies at 22°56'-24°32'N to 91°10'-92°21'E and is one of the non-traditional regions identified for rubber cultivation in India. In order to identify appropriate clones for enhancing NR production and productivity in this region, clone trials are

conducted at Regional Research Station, Agartala since 1979. The results of these trials were reported at various forums (Vinod *et al.*, 1996; Priyadarshan *et al.*, 2005; Priyadarshan *et al.*, 1998; Antony *et al.*, 2010; Antony *et al.*, 2012), but production and productivity evaluation from small grower's plantations is not available. In this background, the present study was conducted analysing the clone recommendations for North-East (NE) India and evaluating the yield from the fields of small growers in Tripura and compared with results from experimental trials.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was both exploratory and analytical, involving qualitative as well as

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