

REGION-SPECIFIC ADVISORY ON *HEVEA* CLONES SUITED TO TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL RUBBER GROWING AREAS OF INDIA

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The Rubber Board of India has evolved clone recommendations for the traditional and non-traditional regions and updating of these recommendations is done periodically based on data that is made available from the clonal evaluation trials in various regions. In addition to these recommendations, the formulation of a region-specific clone advisory based on agroclimatic zoning was a long felt need of the rubber plantation sector, so as to enable maximisation of rubber yield from each region and thereby improve rubber production *per se*. Based on results of 29 long term field evaluation trials of rubber clones in the traditional regions as well as studies on disease reaction, genotype x environment interaction studies and yield from nine large scale and on farm evaluation trials of these clones in Tripura, Assam and northern part of Bengal, region specificity in performance of the clones was determined. This paper details the specificity in performance of clones in the planting recommendations across the various agroclimatic zones where rubber is presently cultivated. A new region-specific advisory of clones suited to each of the nine agroclimatically distinct zones in the traditional region and the non-traditional regions of rubber cultivation in India is formulated for the first time.

Key words: Agroclimatic zones, Disease tolerance, Growth, Region specificity, Rubber clones, Rubber yield, Stability.

INTRODUCTION

Rubber cultivation in India is spread across diverse agroclimatic regions stretched over the sub continent from its peninsular southern tip to the foothills of

the Himalayas in the North East. Being a commercially important perennial cash crop that exhibits versatility in performance across varied climatic regimes, *Hevea brasiliensis* has covered over 827 thousand ha