



Presently there is a lack of authentic information on the seed yield of these species. The largest Jatropha cultivation in India was in Nashik district of Maharashtra and the average yield in this region has been in the range of 1.0 to 1.5 tons/ha/yr. There are some reports that claim yields of 10 tons/ha, which are unrealistic under average

rain-fed conditions of cultivation. It is important to have realistic yield estimates and economics of production through a series of multi-locational yield trials under

launching the programme on a large scale. In the absence of authentic data, attractive yield predictions can mislead farmers and result in disappointment.

With this background, a national workshop on Jatropha and Other Perennial Oilseed Species was held from 5-7 August 2003 at BAIF, Warje, Pune. The workshop provided a forum to share knowledge and deliberate on issues related to production, processing and policy matters by scientists and extension workers. The following recommendations have emerged during the workshop. We sincerely feel that the recommendations will help the policy makers, researchers and development experts to take up suitable innovations for promoting the cultivation and use of Jatropha and other perennial oilseed species in the future.

Recommendations

1. Production

- * A systematic germplasm collection and evaluation programme should be initiated for important tree-based oilseed species to identify elite material from the existing natural variation.
- * It is necessary to establish clonal seed orchards and develop mass multiplication techniques to ensure easy supply of elite planting material to growers.
- * Agronomic studies to standardise cultivation practices such as spacing, pruning, nutrition and production system should be carried out under different agro-ecological conditions.
- * A series of field demonstrations should be established using currently available information, to highlight the economic viability of cultivation of species such as Jatropha as alternative options on degraded lands and community wastelands.
- * Realistic economics of production should be worked out for a range of soil, environment and management conditions.
- * Nodal agencies should be identified in different regions to procure superior quality seeds and plants.
- * Research should be undertaken to improve the yields and value addition through alternative uses such as medicinal ingredients and biopesticides.

2. Processing and Marketing

- * Appropriate processing technologies should be developed for small-scale processing operations.
- * Support for the establishment of processing units should be made available to community groups or cooperatives.
- * Local networks should be created to link self-help groups engaged in seed collection with those operating processing plants and oil dealers.
- * Information and marketing services should be strengthened in order to stabilise prices for oilseeds, oil and by-products.

3. Policies

- * A National Council should be established to promote and regulate all aspects of production, processing and utilisation of tree-borne oilseed species.
- * Considering the long gestation period, growers of perennial oilseed species should be given a specific period of tax exemption from the time the plantations start yielding commercially.
- * Blending of biofuel with conventional fuel should be legalised.

THE BAIF MISSION

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BAIF is a Public Charitable Trust and a recognised Research Organisation founded by Late Dr. Manibhai Desai. Contributions made to BAIF are exempt from Income Tax under Section 35 (1)(ii).



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