Knowledge level of tapioca growers on recommended technologies in tapioca cultivation

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ABSTRACT

Cassava, popularly known as tapioca, is grown in India for more than a century. It is one of the most important tropical root crops. To achieve the growing demands of increasing population, the tapioca production has to be increased. Hence, a study was undertaken to assess the knowledge level of tapioca growers on recommended technologies in its cultivation. The study was taken up in the tapioca predominant districts of Salem, Dharmapuri, Namakkal and Villupuram in Tamil Nadu state with a sample size of three hundred growers selected based on random sampling method. The findings revealed that cent per cent of the tapioca growers were aware of the recommended varieties. Fairly high level of knowledge was found in quantity of farm yard manure to be applied, intercropping and recommended time of harvesting. Very low level of knowledge was found in sett-treatment with bio-fertilizers, management of red spidermite and Cercospora leaf spot disease.

Key words : Knowledge, Tapioca growers, Recommended technologies.

Tapioca is one the most important tropical root crops. Its starchy roots are a major source of dietary energy for more than 500 million people. It is otherwise called as Cassava, Manioc, Mandioca and Yucca in different parts of the world. Globally tapioca is grown in an area of 18.51 million ha producing 202.65 million tonnes with a productivity of 10.95 t/ha. (Anonymous, 2005). It is an important alternate source of energy to meet the demands of increasing population. It provides raw material for paper, laundry, pulp, textiles, pharmaceuticals, glue, plywood, rubber, medicine and glucose industries. Value added products like starch, sago, liquid glucose, dextrin, vitamin C and high fructose syrup are also made from tapioca. Food preparations like noodles, vermicellis, sauce, ice cream, bread, cake, pudding, fruit pies, soups and other aesthetic value products are also prepared. Thus, cassava plays a significant role in generating income for the farmers as an agro-industry. In India, tapioca is cultivated in an area of 0.24 million hectares producing 6.7 million tonnes with a productivity of 27.92 t/ha. (Srinivas and Anantharaman, 2005). In south India, cassava is widely grown in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. At present, the sago and starch industries are meeting about 80 per cent demand of the cassava food products of the country and has generated employment for over 5 Lakh persons in rural areas. In fact, this industry is the backbone of the rural economy in Tamil Nadu. Besides that, it is a staple food for majority of the population in southern states like Kerala and parts of Tamil Nadu. To achieve the growing damands of increasing population in our country by 2000 AD, the tapioca production will have to be raised. Hence, a study was undertaken to assess the knowledge level of tapioca growers on recommended technologies in tapioca cultivation.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the tapioca predominant districts of Salem, Dharmapuri, Namakkal and Villupuram in Tamil Nadu state. Attur, Harur, Rasipuram and Sankarapuram taluks were purposively selected since they have the largest area under tapioca cultivation in Salem, Dharmapuri, Namakkal and Villupuram districts, respectively. A total number of 300 tapioca growers was selected following the random Sampling method. A knowledge test, after employing difficulty index and discrimination index, was designed, and this was administered. A well structured and pre-tested interview schedule was used to collect the data.

OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION

Technology wise knowledge level:

The data collected on technology wise knowledge level of the respondents on tapioca cultivation are discussed. In this section. The results are presented under the sub headings *viz.,* varieties, crop production, crop protection and harvest technology.

Varieties:

Cent per cent of the tapioca growers were aware of the varieties recommended for the study area *viz.,* Co1, Co2, Co3, MVD1, H.165 and H.226.