

US, China to boost natural rubber production

Opportunities for production and growth in demand for natural rubber are encouraging in view of the improvement in the economic indicators of the US, China, Japan and Europe, said Kamarul Baharain Basir, secretary general, Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries.

There would be an increase of 4.7 per cent in NR supply to 10.83 million tonne in 2012 while the consumption would rise 4.8 per cent to 11.59 million tonne. Of this, China would consume 3.67 million tonne and India one million tonne.

Inaugurating the fourth India Rubber Summit here, he said to bridge the demand-supply gap, governments should extend incentives to farmers to enable them to raise production. The industry needs to be encouraged to set up captive NR plantations. He called upon NR producers to strengthen their scientific and technological efforts towards developing alternative sources of NR such as Russian Dandelion, guayule, sugar and glycol.

James Jacob, director, Rubber Research Institute of India, said with the aid of satellites, the RRII had successfully developed the capability to identify potential areas for new rubber cultivation in any part of the world and to study impact of global warming on NR productivity. From satellite images, it is estimated that Tripura has about 58,637 hectare (ha) of NR plantations as of March 2012 and has a potential to cultivate rubber in 100,000 ha. Northeast as a whole has the potential to grow rubber in 450,000 ha while only less than one-fourth of the actual potential is now achieved.

It is estimated that for every one degree rise in temperature, there would be about 15 per cent decline in productivity. During the past 50 years, the maximum temperature at RRII campus in Kottayam has risen by 2.60 C and minimum by 1.50 C while the annual rainfall decreased by 375 mm, he said.

Rajiv Budhreja, director general, Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association, said there had been unprecedented capacity creation in the tyre sector in the last 4-5 years in view of the rise in demand from the automobile sector. The new thrust being given by the government for development of road infrastructure has led to 33 per cent increase in bus production in two years. Besides, the depreciation of the Indian rupee by up to 17 per cent in the last 12 months has provided a strong impetus for tyre exports, which went up 46 per cent during the period.

Vinod Simon, president, All India Rubber Industries Association, said India would be the second largest global player in rubber by 2020, next only to China. India is the fourth largest commercial vehicles market and the second largest 2-wheeler market globally and is poised to become the global automobile hub.

Speaking on 'Organising small growers for productivity improvement: An Indian experience,' PC Cyriac, former chairman, Rubber Board,

suggested a three-tier mechanism comprising rubber producers societies, rubber marketing societies and rubber marketing federation for boosting production and marketing.