

DAS recorded very less incidence (1.5%) as compared to that of 60 per cent control (Anon. 2000).

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Front line demonstrations in rainfed castor as pure crop

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Castor (*Ricinus communis* L.) occupies an important place in the country's vegetable oil economy. During the year 2000-2001, the area under castor for the first time has crossed one lakh ha and presently it is cultivated over an area of 1.08 lakh ha in the country, the states of Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat being the major contributors, although other states like Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Orissa, parts of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar cultivate to a certain extent (Anonymous, 2002).

India stands first in area, production and productivity of castor in the world and earns foreign exchange of Rs.650 crores annually from this crop. Oilseeds being mostly raised under rainfed conditions are important for livelihood security of small and marginal farmers in arid and semi arid ecosystems in India. In Tamil Nadu castor is grown mainly under rainfed condition as an intercrop with groundnut. The

farmers are traditionally using only local varieties which are poor yielders. The technological achievements in the last two decades have tremendously improved the productivity of these crops. To convince and educate the farmers about the potentialities of the new technologies a strong transfer of technology programme is an essential pre-requisite. Hence 'Front line demonstrations in oilseeds' played the vital role of transferring the improved technologies from research institute to the farmer's field and making the country self sufficient in oilseed sector.

The productivity potentials and profitability of the latest improved castor production technologies such as raising of rainfed castor as pure crop under farmer's conditions were demonstrated using TMVCH1 hybrid castor at 10 farmers holdings during the year 2000-2001 and eight farmers holdings during the year 2001-2002. Fertilizer application of 30:15:15 kg NPK/ha

