

EXPORT ORIENTED RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Indian Cardamom Research Institute (ICRI) which is the Research component of Spices Board was established in Idukki district of Kerala in the year 1978 for conducting basic and applied research on cardamom. It has two Regional Research Stations (RRS) in Karnataka and in Tamil Nadu which look into the location specific problems of cardamom. To undertake research on Large Cardamom which is one of the most important cash crops of Sikkim State and Darjeeling District of West Bengal, ICRI, RRS Sikkim was established at Gangtok, Sikkim.

The main objective of Research at the Indian Cardamom Research Institute is for increasing and sustaining the productivity of cardamom (both small & large) which would thereby help in, producing adequate surplus for meeting the export demand thus enhancing the net income of spice farmers. Identification of location specific varieties, which respond positively to the changing weather; advanced agronomic management for sustainable production, reducing toxic chemical load in the eco-system through integrated pest management technique, identification and promotion of alternative strategies for disease management through bio agents, identification of molecular markers in high yielding varieties, soil testing, virus indexing through Molecular Markers and farm advisory services are some of the major thrust areas of research. Emphasis is also there on marginal and low production regions of small cardamom growing tracts as well as large cardamom growing regions of North East States.

Major Areas of Research are Crop improvement, Biotechnology, Crop management, Crop protection, Post-Harvest Technology & Organic Farming. Farmer participatory research and technology evaluation are the major activities undertaken by the research department. These include Evaluation of hybrids in Farmers' fields, Demonstration trials at different locations, Demonstration of Bio agent production & usage and Cluster based demonstration of Large Cardamom technology under National Agricultural Innovation Project. Ecosystem conservation & protection programmes cover

germplasm conservation, pest and disease surveillance, screening of germplasm for pests and disease, weather monitoring & crop impact studies, monitoring of pesticide residues and soil health analysis. Apart from these sustainable production technologies are also being undertaken for varietal development, Integrated Pest and Disease management as well as Integrated Nutrient Management. In addition to these, externally funded Multi institutional and National projects are ongoing in most of the Divisions. The impact of climatic changes on production and increasing cost of production are also being addressed to make Indian spices more competitive in the International market.

Farmer oriented programmes include (a) Bio agent production, (b) Soil test based advisory services, (c) Scientific Crop Production services (d) Scientific Crop Protection services (e) Short term training programmes and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) (f) Pesticide residue analyses at farm gate level, (g) Weather forecasting services to all spice growing areas and (h) Spice Clinics. Besides these, Transfer of Technologies to farmers and targeted groups through various extension activities such as Scientist-Farmer interface, group meetings, seminars, workshops, demonstration plots, production of audio visual aids and publication of extension materials are also being carried out. ICRI Research stations also maintain farms to assist the scientists to lay out experimental plots for conducting research activities and for demonstrating all the scientific cultivation practices for public to visit and learn.
