

Sell castor upon harvest

This year good rain was received in mid-June, 2023 in major castor growing areas of North Gujarat and West Rajasthan due to cyclone, increased castor acreage. In the current year of 2023-24 the acreage under castor has been estimated to increase about 9.52 lakh ha over 9.32 lakh ha in 2022-23 and production might be same as last year about 19.80 lakh tonnes, as monsoon remained normal to good in the castor growing regions in India.

In the current year of 2023-24 in Gujarat, the area under castor is estimated to about 7.25 lakh ha over 7.16 lakh ha last year and production is estimated slight less about 15.13 lakh tonnes as against 16.03 lakh tonnes in 2022-23 (2nd Advance Estimate dt. 17-1-2024). The crop condition is normal, will result in normal yield. In Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, the area is estimated higher than the last year and crop condition is normal will result in higher yield.

Last year due to higher castor production, its price, which was prevailing around Rs. 1400 per 20 kg in January, 2023 in various markets of Gujarat, steadily decreased to around Rs. 1200 per 20 kg in April, 2023 and further to Rs. 1130 per 20 kg in June, 2023. Then it slightly increased to around Rs. 1230 per 20 kg in September, 2023, but following the higher production estimates for current year, it started declining and currently in February 2024, it is ruling around 1120 per 20 kg at harvest, is expected to remain downside from this level.

The export of castor oil decreased from 7.15 lakh tonnes in 2021-22 to 6.06 lakh tonnes in 2022-23. Moreover, in current year from April to December, 2023 about 4.63 lakh tonnes castor oil has been exported and till March, 2024 it might be around 6.20 lakh tonnes. The domestic consumption and derivatives exports of castor oil are expected about 2.20 lakh tonnes. This requires crushing of about 20 lakh tonnes castor seeds. This indicates that, current year's production is sufficient to meet the castor oil demand. The carry over stock of past years with the traders and farmers might be about 2 lakh tonnes.

Considering these all, the research team of Department of Agricultural Economics, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, analysed the historical monthly price data of castor collected from Patan APMC. Based on the econometric analysis, it is revealed that the **prices of castor during March to April, 2024 may remain in the range of Rs. 1050 to 1150 per 20 kg (5250 to 5750 Rs/qtl) during harvesting period.** This may be taken a note by the farmers to take their own decision to sale castor upon harvest, without going for storage, keeping the above situation in view.

As the export opportunities are shrinking due to adverse condition in international market, there are less chances that castor price may go up in future.