

Climate change to affect rubber production

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Natural rubber (NR) will be in short supply in the near future, both domestically and globally, provided the world economy does not seriously under-perform, said James Jacob, Director, Rubber Research Institute of India, Rubber Board and Vice-Chairman of International Rubber Research and Development Board, Kuala Lumpur.

Speaking about the recent developments and the outcome of several studies conducted by the RRII he told BL, for 1 deg C rise in temperature, NR productivity in the traditional regions can be reduced by 12-15 per cent, whereas in the North East, this may not have any impact on NR productivity. Climate change induced by global warming is beginning to affect production of NR in the traditional rubber growing countries of Asia, including India.

As climate continues to warm, it is likely that more areas in North East India may become congenial for NR cultivation and traditional areas such as Kerala may see declining fortunes.

In the past 50 years, traditional NR growing regions have witnessed more than 1.5-2 deg C rise in temperature. This has, in fact, hit NR productivity by more than 10 per cent, but statistics will show that NR productivity during the past 50 years registered appreciable increase. This is actually due to large areas coming under high yielding clones such as RRII 105.