

Natural rubber output buoyed by a combination of factors

Production up 8.4% at 7,75,000 tonnes during 2021-22

V SAJEEV KUMAR

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The proactive measures adopted by the Rubber Board to boost production have started yielding results with figures showing an upward trend during 2021-22, and the output is seen exceeding 7,75,000 tonnes for the year.

KN Raghavan, Executive Director, Rubber Board, cited a combination of factors for the surge in production, which included buoyancy in prices, increased rain guarding of rubber plantations, more area brought under tapping through the strategy of "adoption of untapped holdings". Also, measures taken aimed at disease prevention through prophylactic spraying and popularising self-tapping have



contributed towards the surge in production.

He said that 3,88,000 hectares were rain guarded in 2021-22 as against 2,50,000 hectares during the previous year. Likewise, 40,000 hectares were brought under tapping in 2021-22 through adoption as against 14,000 hectares during the previous year.

Consumption up

However, natural rubber consumption has also gone up simultaneously during 2021-22 and is seen touching 12.4 lakh tonnes during the year. This was mainly on account of im-

proved performance by the automobile/tyre sector.

The gap between production and consumption has been filled by imports, which is expected to be 5.3 lakh tonnes during 2021-22. The natural rubber exports showed a downward trend and are expected to be in the region of 3,500 tonnes even as international prices were higher than prices in domestic market through almost the entire year.

Raghavan added that a National Rubber Mission (NRM) to double the area under rubber cultivation by 2026 is under preparation. The objective of NRM is to make India self-sufficient in rubber production.

Meanwhile, the Rubber Board observed its foundation day on April 18 with various programmes that included the launching of the second edition of virtual trade fair.