

Founding Members of Pragati, the World's First Sustainable Castor Initiative, Publish 4th Year Results

Mumbai, India - January 27 2021: The founding members of the sustainable castor initiative, Pragati – Arkema, BASF, Jayant Agro-Organics along with implementation partner, Solidaridad – have finalized and published the final audited and certified results of the fourth year of their program.

The Pragati project was launched in May 2016 driven by a baseline survey of more than 1,000 castor farmers in Gujarat, India, the state that supplies the majority of the world's castor demand. The goal of the project is to enable sustainable castor crop production by:

- Using good agricultural practices to increase yield and farmer income
- Efficiently using water resources and maintaining soil fertility
- Driving adoption of good waste management practices
- Enabling better health and safety practices and respecting human rights

After successfully completing three years of the initial Phase 1 of the program, the founding members committed to a further three years Phase 2 of the project beginning late 2019.

In December 2020, the members officially updated the impacts of the program so far:

- More than 1,400 farmers in year 4 and over 4,500 farmers in total have been trained, audited, and certified
- More than 10,000 tonnes for year 4 and 24,000 tonnes of SuCCESS certified castor seed in total have been cultivated
- 50 per cent yield improvement as compared with the yield published by the local government in the region for 2019-2020
- More than 3,600 hectares in year 4 and over 8,700 hectares are now being farmed in accordance with the SuCCESS sustainable castor code (see www.castorsuccess.org)
- More than 12,000 hours of classroom teaching have been concluded
- Approximately 5,000 safety kits and crop protection product boxes have been distributed free of charge
- Water consumption has been lowered by approximately 19% in the demo plots where accurate measurement and control is in place
- In year 4, 80 % of farmers have adopted furrow irrigation instead of flood irrigation and 20% of farmers have adopted skip furrow irrigation
- Farmers from more than 69 villages in North Gujarat now participate in the program
- One customer event was hosted early in 2020 in order to create end-user awareness and involvement – this involved a guided tour of the farms, trading yards, and castor processing facility; A second event will be planned in the near future once travel restrictions are eased

“Solidaridad is privileged to develop and implement the world's first sustainability certification system called SuCCESS for the castor sector. I congratulate our consortium of partners and India's castor farmers for achieving an unprecedented 50 per cent increase in their income while reducing water usage by 19 per cent,” said Shatadru Chattopadhyay, Managing Director, Solidaridad.

About Partners:

Arkema is a global leader in advanced materials. BASF is the world's leading chemical company. Jayant Agro-Organics Ltd. is a pioneer in castor oil-based chemicals in India.

Solidaridad is an international civil society organization working in the area of sustainable economic development. With more than 50 years of experience in the sustainable agriculture sector, Solidaridad facilitates the development of socially responsible, ecologically sound and economically viable supply chains.



Castor farmer applying targeted irrigation techniques



Solidaridad training the farmers in the field