Arkema and its partners sign phase 2 commitment to ‘Pragati’, the world's first sustainable castor bean program

The founding members of the ‘Pragati’ project for sustainable castor crop – Arkema, BASF, Jayant Agro-Organics along with implementation partner Solidaridad – recently met to celebrate the successful results of phase 1 of the project and formally committed to phase 2, which will extend the program until July 31, 2022.

On January 18 to 21 in a three-day tour of the castor farms, demo plots, and local trading markets the member companies invited a select group of end-users to experience first-hand the impacts of the program in Gujarat, India – home to approximately 70% of the world’s castor crop.

During the event, the founding members highlighted the achievements of phase 1 of the project (2016-2019) and also announced the key goals for ‘Pragati’ phase 2 (2020 – 2022):

- Training and certifying an additional 4,000 farmers, thus bringing the total to 7,000
- Increasing involvement of women in the program
- Developing the awareness and involvement among key downstream end-users – specifically by inviting stakeholders to actively participate in the Sustainable Castor Association (www.castorsuccess.org)
- Continuing to improve crop yield, water conservation and basic chemical hygiene

After completing a 2016 baseline survey of more than 1,000 castor farmers in Gujarat, India, the ‘Pragati’ project was launched in May 2016 with the goal of enabling 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

Key achievements of phase 1 of project ‘Pragati’ to date are:

- More than 13,000 tons of certified castor beans have been cultivated
- More than 3,000 castor farmers have been audited and certified
- Approximately 5,200 hectares of castor beans have been farmed in accordance with the castor sustainability code (now called SuCCESS (Sustainable Castor Caring Environmental & Social Standards)
- More than 8,000 hours of classroom training have been completed;
- More than 3,000 safety kits and crop protection product storage boxes have been distributed
- Water consumption has dropped by approximately 25% in the demo plots
- Crop yield has improved by more than 50% compared to the 2016 baseline study

Arkema has chosen the location of Jurong Island in Singapore to build its new world-scale plant dedicated to the manufacture of the amino 11 monomer and its flagship Rilsan® polyamide 11 resins, high-performance polymers derived 100% from castor oil.
A designer of materials and innovative solutions, Arkema shapes materials and creates new uses that accelerate customer performance. Our balanced business portfolio spans high-performance materials, industrial specialties and coating solutions. Our globally recognized brands are ranked among the leaders in the markets we serve. Reporting annual sales of €8.7 billion in 2019, we employ approximately 20,500 people worldwide and operate in close to 35 countries. We are committed to active engagement with all our stakeholders. Our research centers in North America, France and Asia concentrate on advances in bio-based products, new energies, water management, electronic solutions, lightweight materials and design, home efficiency and insulation. www.arkema.com

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