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Promoting true cinnamon in Islands under CSS-NHM Project on Spices: Applications

Invited from Island Stakeholders

True cinnamon is one of the ancient spices that have been valued in flavouring and pharmaceutical industries. True cinnamon is extracted from the inner bark of the botanical species namely *Cinnamomum verum*. The bark is characterized by sweet taste and delicate aroma, which makes it an ingredient of choice for food industries. Good quality produce should not be thicker than a thick paper, thus easy to break, and should melt in mouth. A number of medicinal properties are offered by the bark. However, most of the produce in the domestic markets is flooded with thick, dark brown bark with pungent taste. This material is derived from species other than cinnamon and is technically termed as cassia or false cinnamon or Chinese cinnamon. Cassia is known to contain coumarins, which are potentially harmful for health, while cinnamon is safe due to negligible content of this compound. Hence, true cinnamon needs to be promoted for obtaining safer and pharmaceutically potent produce.

As per the report by Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development (DASD), Calicut, Kerala during the year 2019-20, India imported 30,000 tonnes of cassia thereby causing loss of foreign exchange worth 57,000 lakh rupees. In order to reduce country's dependency on external supplies and provide better quality/ safer produce, cultivation of cinnamon is being promoted under the CSS-NHM Project on Spices project being implemented by DASD, Calicut. ICAR-CIARI, Port Blair has been involved in the research and development activities for promoting cultivation of cinnamon in the islands. In order to sensitize the stakeholders and provide technical guidance for commercial cultivation and processing, front line demonstrations have been planned at farmers' fields.

Interested stakeholders who wish to take up demonstrations at their farm are requested to contact Dr. Ajit Arun Waman, Scientist- SS (SPMA), ICAR-CIARI and PI, CSS-NHM on Spices Project (Whatsapp/ Mobile: 9933263441; Email: ajit.arun@icar.gov.in). Selected beneficiaries in the project would be provided quality planting material and technical help in cultivation and postharvest management of cinnamon. Cultivation of cinnamon could be taken up as an intercrop in existing coconut/ arecanut gardens, as a pure crop, or as a component of agro-tourism farms. This could help in making the islands a hub for cinnamon production.