PERFORMANCE OF DIFFERENT RAINGUARD TYPES FOR RUBBER (*Hevea brasiliensis* Muell.Arg.)

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ABSTRACT

Well distributed moderate rainfall is essential for good growth and production of natural rubber by rubber trees (*Hevea brasiliensis*). However, rainfall may also be a limiting factor for tapping activity. In addition to that, due to loss of crop, rainguard is used as modernizing latex technology to conserve the yield loss from spells and diurnal rainfall pattern. Also bark become drier faster with rainguard after the rainfall was ceased. This research study was conducted at RRI at Agalawatta to evaluate the performance of different rainguards types on rubber yield.

Observations were made by using three types of rainguards. These rainguards types were Apron, Kissan and Belgium type. These three types of rainguards were evaluated to compare the effectiveness of rainguard preventing rain disturb and rubber yield, tapper's efficiency on each rainguard types and tapper attitude on rainguarding. In addition to that financial analysis at the present condition of the rubber industry was conducted.

Consequently Apron type and Kissan type significantly effect on yield of rubber, while less significant effect reveals in Belgium type. Where as time taken to tapping process, Apron and Kissan type shown significant effect, and yet Belgium type shown no significant effect with the control, Apron type resulted highest overall preference from tappers. This study revealed that at the present condition of the rubber industry, Kissan type and Apron type are financially worthwhile. However, it is recommended to conduct the trial for one year period with annual rainfall pattern and cause to determine the profitability of rainguards allocate with the repairs in shelf life of the rainguard types.

Key words: Tapping process, Rainguard, Financial analysis