



JATROPHA HANDBOOK

2D EDITION

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APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3 (OF 6)

HARVESTING



Harvesting

3.1 Rules of thumb

The rules of Thumb for the harvesting process in practice are:

- Measure on spot in existing plantations the yield of dry seed picking per hour, asking a number of people to pick;
- Look at existing Jatropha fields which are in production, to predict the yield curve over the year. This can give a good understanding for the prediction of your own fields yield and storage needs;
- Do not enter in Jatropha production in an area where labor costs exceed € US\$4,-/day;
- Most likely it would be more attractive for a farmer to pay labor by the seed collected as by hour or day;
- Jatropha in high yielding fields will require approximately 8 hours/ person for the collection of ca 60 kg;
- Provide the pickers with proper tools and baskets and train them on how to pick most effectively;
- where labor is costly, experimenting with line plantings with tractor passage spacing and picking carts is worthwhile;
- Bulk density of Jatropha seeds is approx 400 kg/m³;
- One ha can yield 0 to 6 MT of seed per ha/a in the fourth year of establishment, but the high value is only under optimal nutrient/soil and climate and water conditions and selected high yielding seed. So it is all about inputs and costs, and balancing the economics of return on investment!

3.2 Tips and tricks

Some tips are given hereunder with relation to post-harvest :

- Careful planning is a must to make Jatropha grow successfully;
- Optimize yields of Jatropha: very high nutrient gifts might not be worthwhile; however when no nutrients will be given depletion will take place, and yields will gradually go down;
- Looking at experiences in the region with Jatropha, interviewing the farmers and press owners will give insight in both positive and negative factors in growing Jatropha. Much can be learnt to prevent the same errors.