

Chapter 7

Scenario of Quality Potato Production in Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

*Potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) is one of the most important non-traditional tuber crops of Rajasthan. The potato tuber is a modified stem developed underground on a specialized structure called stolon. It contributes to food and nutritional security and provide cheap source of vegetable. It is used either alone or intermingled with other vegetables. It is also consumed as many fried salted food items. Potato is a highly nutritious, easily digestible, wholesome food. In Rajasthan, where varied climatic conditions promoting cultivation of almost every crops and vegetables, the economic conditions of growers, lack of storage facilities and lack of improved technologies for the state remain as bottleneck for its cultivation. In this chapter I tried to elaborate the constraints and possible suggestion for increasing cultivation of potato which is fairly to highly responsive to inputs supplied and gave cash returns in short periods.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-1715-3.ch007

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INTRODUCTION

Potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) is one of the most important food crop after wheat, maize and rice, contributing to food and nutritional security in the world and produces more food per unit area per unit time than cereals (<http://cpri.ernet.in>). Potato is a highly nutritious, easily digestible, wholesome food containing carbohydrates, proteins, minerals, vitamins and high quality dietary fiber with high calorific value. Similarly, the quality of protein is better and balanced than that of cereals protein from nutrition point of view. Potato is a capital and energy intensive crop.

The potato tuber is a modified stem developed underground on a specialized structure called stolon. It contains all the characteristics of a normal stem like dormant bud (eye) and scaly leaf (eyebrow). Thus, potato provides more nutrition than cereals and vegetables. Potato tuber is a bulky commodity which responds strongly to its prevailing environment so it needs proper storage. Most of the people in India have either no knowledge or wrong notions about the nutritive value of potato. It does not cause obesity because it contains low fat (0.1 per cent) (Singh, 2013). Potato is fairly to highly responsive to inputs supplied and gave cash returns.

In the present chapter I tried to explore some possibilities for intensive and profitable production of potato in the Rajasthan on sustain basis.

CLIMATE OF RAJASTHAN

The success of Indian agriculture is largely dependent on behavior of SE monsoon as the country's almost 60% of total cultivated area is still rainfed. The mostly Rajasthan state and hot arid western zone of India comprises of Thar Desert always faces an uncertainty of weather condition. Improved agronomical and engineering practices lead to sustainable income from this drought prone areas. The environmental degradation adversely affects the livelihoods of rural poor as they relies on the available natural resources. Thus, agriculture or particularly rainfed agriculture in Rajasthan is very complex, diverse and risk prone and characterized by low levels of productivity with low input usage. The Rajasthan state represents almost all types of climatic conditions including extremes of weather variables, soils, water availability and biodiversity. The extreme of western parts having light sandy to sandy loam soils while other parts of the state have fairly deep vertisols. Similarly, the soils provide varying types of underground environment to crops.

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