

## Brazil Has US\$ 42 Million for Those Willing to Plant Castor Beans

Contributed by Márcia Wonghon  
Wednesday, 08 June 2005

The National Program to Strengthen Family Farming (Pronaf) will offer a line of credit worth US\$ 41.6 million (100 million reais) to encourage the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of castor beans.

This oil seed crop is one of the chief raw materials for use in the production of biodiesel, a non-polluting fuel that will be added to diesel oil.

The announcement was made this Monday, June 6, by the Minister of Science and Technology, Eduardo Campos, who participated in a seminar on biodiesel and the Northeast, in Recife, Northeastern Brazil.

According to Campos, the goal is to benefit 38 thousand families, 30 thousand of them in the semi-arid region of the Northeast, by 2006, through cultivation of this crop.

He informed that the participation of family farmers in castor bean production will generate US\$ 41.6 million (100 million reais) in additional income, annually, for all the families involved in the program.

The biodiesel program is aimed at consolidating Brazil's leadership of a clean and renewable energy source.

"Our expectation is that biodiesel production will open prospects for exports and reduce diesel imports, which currently cost the public coffers US\$ 1.2 billion per year," the Minister argued.

He informed that Brazil currently consumes 37 billion liters of diesel fuel per year, of which 15%, or 6 billion liters, are imported.

Campos observed that when diesel fuel begins to be sold to consumers this year with a 2% mixture of biodiesel, production will not be able to keep up with demand.

"740 million liters of biodiesel will be necessary to compose the mixture," he pointed out.

That is why the Ministry is investing in biodiesel refinery projects, which will also promote sustainable development and social inclusion.

During the event Campos signed an agreement with João Eudes Machado Tenório, mayor of Pesqueira, 209 kilometers from Recife, for the installation of a biodiesel factory in the municipality, using castor beans as raw material.

The plant will receive US\$ 416 thousand (1 million reais) in funds from the Ministry of Science and Technology for the purchase of machinery. The factory will have an initial capacity to produce two and a half million liters of biodiesel.

The national biodiesel program, launched last December by President Lula, has the goal of creating 900 thousand jobs and involves 14 Brazilian Ministries.

Agência Brasil