

Examination of the of agriculture market information network in Sri Lanka

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Since independence in Sri Lanka, many governments had made many attempts to develop the agricultural sector. Efforts to develop the agricultural sector require a system that would enable the flow of market information to stakeholders. In this context, this research examines the agriculture market information network in Sri Lanka.

Agricultural market information can be categorized as current market information and historical market information. Current market information focuses on prices and this facilitate bargaining and spatial arbitrage. Historical market information is compiled over a period of time and is used for production planning, storage decisions, government planning and early warning. In Sri Lanka, over the years, the state controlled market system has diminished and private traders and enterprise has emerged. This further emphasizes the importance on the flow of agricultural market information.

This research applies a qualitative approach to identify strengths and weaknesses of the existing agriculture market information network and provide recommendation to for further improvement. Therefore a questionnaire was developed to collect data from farmers and structured interviews were carried out with personnel of government agencies.

The research findings are that various agencies are involved in collection of agricultural market information though the process of collecting such information is not integrated. Furthermore these information are not provided on time to relevant stakeholders. The research also identifies that small farmers are highly affected due to lack of integration in providing agricultural market information and historical market information are not utilized for decision making to improve future agricultural crop planning.

Key words: Agriculture market information network, Current market information, Historical market information, Agricultural crop planning, Small farmers

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