

## **Potentials and Constraints for Application of Agro Tourism in Welimada**

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Agro tourism is a form of tourism which capitalizes on the rural agriculture and is currently developing in many countries. It provides opportunities to rest, relax, enjoy and study farming and related activities. Sri Lanka has the capacity to apply agro tourism capitalizing on the various agricultural activities in different regions. Welimada is an agricultural area that is located in the up-country where mostly vegetables and paddy are cultivated. This study is conducted to identify potentials and constraints in applying agro tourism in Welimada. Secondary objectives are to identify existing agricultural activities and tourist attractions in the area and to profile the farming community. Primary data was collected using 45 questionnaires, 5 interviews and various observations conducted in the area. Data analysis was done through qualitative and quantitative methods and MS Excel and SPSS were used for the quantitative analysis. It could be identified that most of the residents are living in the area for a long time and some of them are involved in farming while being engaged in another professional activity. There are 3-5 members in their families. They have home gardens and grow various crops. Most farmers have 1-3 highlands and 1-2 paddy land ownership of around 81-160 perches that is located within 3-7 km from their houses. Farming in the area is categorized as paddy only, vegetable only, paddy and vegetables, vegetables and fruits, vegetables and flowers, and animal husbandry within plantations. Most farmers work in their lands for more than 6 hours a day. Land is very often prepared as terraces. Labour is obtained from their own families. Main conclusion of the study is that there is a considerable potential to apply agro tourism in the focused region.

Further, tourist attractions such as Nuwara Eliya, Bandarawela, Haputhale, and Ohiya being adjacent sites, an eventual agro tourism programme could also help promote traditional tourism. However, inadequate knowledge and lack of attention from the public sector are identified as the main constraints on agro tourism in the area.

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