

Present Situation and Prospects of Pineapple Cultivation in Gampaha District

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Sri Lankan Pineapples (*Ananas comosus* L.) have an excellent demand in both local and international markets in terms of its pleasant taste and flavor. In Sri Lanka there is a huge potential for growing pineapple because of ideal agro climatic condition. Even though growers are still unable to cater the overseas demand and sometimes even the local market demand due to insufficient and erratic pineapple production and supply. Therefore, it is necessary to identify available production and marketing constraints of pineapple cultivation in order to increase the production. Further significant gap between farm gate price and retail price in pineapples is a reason for not getting sufficient income to the pineapple growers. In such context, this study was conducted to examine the production and marketing issues faced by the pineapple growers, estimate average cost of production per kilogram of pineapple, to identify marketing channels of fresh pineapples in Gampaha district and analyze net market margins. Dompae and Divulapitiya D.S. Divisions in Gampaha District were selected for the study. Primary data were collected from randomly selected 35 pineapple growers from each D.S Division by using pre-tested structured questionnaire and informal discussions. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used to analyze the data. According to the Kruscal Wallis analysis, less land availability was the main production constraint while second and third constraints were high fertilizer cost and high labour cost respectively. Price fluctuation was the prominent marketing constraint whereas; second and third limitations were lack of reliable information and the delay of payment by collectors respectively. There are three major marketing channels which supplies fresh pineapples from farmer to consumers. Majority of the farmers sell their produce to collectors at field level. Collectors supply pineapple to commission agents in the Colombo Manning market. Retailers are the final sellers. They purchase pineapple from commission agents and sell to the consumers. The average cost of production per kilogram of pineapple was LKR 21.70. In the value chain analysis of pineapple, the highest margin percentage of 44% was obtained by the producers because the harvesting was done by the collectors or wholesalers. The collector's margin was 4.5% and the wholesaler's margin as a percentage was 10.5%. The relatively higher margin (13.5%) was kept by the retailers than collectors and wholesalers. This study suggested that it is vital to improve new planting techniques to increase productivity. And it would be a great help to reduce the cost of production if government can supply fertilizer on subsidized price. To strengthen the market information at producer level it is needed to have an efficient information dissemination system at regional level. As well as farmers should be acknowledge about the existing loan facilities.

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