

**INCREASED YIELDS AND INCOMES FROM IMPROVED FERTILIZER
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AT THE KATUPOTHA
CROPPING SYSTEMS PROJECT**

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Fertilizer applications by farmers are invariably at lower levels, imbalanced, and at inappropriate times. This is a major constraint in rice production at Katupotha, as in most other rice tracts of Sri Lanka.

Studies were conducted in *Maha* 1980-81 and *Maha* 1981-82 in farmers' fields at Katupotha to demonstrate to farmers the benefits of correct fertilizer management practices.

The Agriculture Department fertilizer recommendation was adhered to in one half of the *liyadda*, while the farmers were allowed to carry on with their usual fertilizer application practices in the other half. The only variables between the two halves of the *liyadda* were the rates and types of fertilizers applied, and times of application.

SECTION B

Yield increases ranged from 580 to 2,160 kg per hectare and from 500 to 2,000 kg per hectare, for *Maha* 1980-81 and *Maha* 1981-82 respectively. Based on the then existing market prices, the additional investment by adhering to Agriculture Department recommendations increased profit margins by Rs. 1,800 to 4,720 per hectare and Rs. 1,670 to 6,670 per hectare, for *Maha* 1980-81 and *Maha* 1981-82 respectively.

Because farmers use very little or no basal fertilizers (P and K), it would be worth increasing the subsidy on these fertilizers. The additional expenditure to government could be offset, if necessary, by reducing the subsidy on nitrogenous fertilizers.