

CROPPING SYSTEMS FOR THE RAINFED RICE TRACTS OF THE LOW COUNTRY INTERMEDIATE ZONE

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Studies on cropping systems commenced at Alankara and Moragane in the village of Katupotha in 1977. The large catchment area and the perennial vegetation in it endows the Moragane tract with a more abundant supply of water. In contrast, the Alankara catchment is small with hardly any perennial trees in it. Consequently, the farmers at Moragane grow rain-fed rice crops during both seasons. But at Alankara rice is grown only in the *Maha* season in the entire tract, and only in the valley bottom in the *Yala* season.

Rice yields in these tracts ranged from 1 to 2 tons per hectare in the *Maha* season before the commencement of studies. With timely cultivation and crop establishment, improved weed and fertilizer management practices and with the use of the right varieties appropriate for each land category, yields of rice have increased to 2.5 to 4.5 tons per hectare.

SECTION B

In *Yala*, in the crest and mid-slope of Alankara where either no crops were grown or occasionally rice was cultivated with marginal or no returns, it has been possible to demonstrate that green gram, cowpea, groundnut, black gram and some vegetables could be grown with considerable success.

The net result is that farmers in these tracts and elsewhere, who have followed the new cropping systems approach at Katupotha, have been benefited with increased incomes. Production of rice and other crops mentioned have also increased.