

## POTENTIAL USE OF COMPUTERS IN TEA PLANTATION SECTOR

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Agricultural sector in Sri Lanka contributes a large percentage to the employment, foreign exchange earnings and gross national product of the country. Rapidly increasing cost of production over the last decade has raised many problems in the agricultural sector, especially in the large scale plantation sector. Without finding better and low cost production technologies it is impossible for these producers to survive in the production process.

Computers are the most useful "modern day" tool yet to be developed. It is becoming popular not only in urban commercialized areas, but also in rural commercially oriented agricultural activities. A simulation model developed in a cost effective manner to examine the possibilities of computerizing the plantation sector activities in the country,

The simulation was based on the data collected from the different computer dealers, plantation sector estates and other secondary sources. The cost of computerizing was compared to the cost for the payments of the clerical staff for a given estate. It is found the use of computers in estates is more profitable than having more than three clerks for checkroll work. Even though it is financially superior there are several other factors one should consider before recommending computerization of plantation sector in the country. These factors, impediments etc. were addressed in the last section of the paper.