

F-31 An Economic investigation of fertilizer use in the coconut sector

S D Rajapaksha¹, Nevil Fernando², Mahinda Wijeratne¹

¹Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya ²Agronomy Div, Coconut Research Institute, Lunuwila

The Economy of Sri Lanka is mainly dependent on agriculture. Coconut, which covers 21.7% of the total cultivated area, is the largest plantation crop in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankans need coconut in their daily diet. The increasing rate of domestic consumption of coconut is combined with the rapid rate of growth of population.

Land extent under coconut was reduced due to population pressure, industrialization and urbanization. Annual reduction of coconut extent is about 6000 acres. Even with legislation, it would be difficult to prevent this situation. Hence, it is important to increase the productivity of coconut lands. Productivity of coconut lands can be increased by using coconut fertilizer.

The data was first transferred into a tabulation sheet and tabulated data was analysed later. An adoption index was computed for the analysis.

The mean adoption level in respect of fertilizer application practices in the whole research area was 55%. The adoption levels of the area around the Lunuwila Coconut Research Institute and Weeraketiya Coconut Development Office (CDO) range were 93% and 17%, respectively. There was a significant difference in the adoption levels of the 2 areas studied. There were 3% of high adopters, 82% of middle adopters and 5% low adopters in the study areas.

The reason for ill-adoption of fertilizer in Weeraketiya CDO range was the farmers traditional beliefs. Many believe that they should apply fertilizer regularly and annually. They also believe that fertilized trees are susceptible to pests, diseases and droughts.