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Study of the factors affecting the sustainable management of tea lands in the Sinharaja periphery

A study was conducted on the factors affecting the productivity of the tea smallholdings in the Sinharaja peripheral villages. A total of 38 randomly selected smallholdings from three revealed that most of the representative villages was studied by using questionnaires and field assessments. The data revealed that most of the respondents studied did not face a serious problem related to labour and credit. Only 42% of the respondents had received information from TSHDA. There was a wide variation in the

standard of cultural operations adopted by the farmers. The soil erosion level was considerably low and productivity in all the villages was higher than the national average. The recommended cultural practices, weeds, pests and diseases control measures, plucking, shade management, and fertilizer application were not practiced by significantly high proportion of respondents. The common pests and diseases that observed were shot hole bore blisters blight, wood rot, stem canker and lives wood termite. 40% of the tea plots were infested with termites, the most devastating pest in low country tea. 55.2% of respondents adopted improper methods of weeding such as the productivity of these lands.

In order to maintain sustainable productivity there is an urgent need to provide technical advice and other supports by the extension agencies. The effort will not only assist the tea industry but help protect Sinharaja forest.