

An evaluation of agricultural demonstrations implemented in two Dry Zone districts

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Demonstrations are one of the powerful tools used in the dissemination of modern agricultural technology to farming communities. Evaluation of demonstration program regard to the acceptance, feasibility and expected modifications is an essential component of the demonstration programme. This study was conducted using a series of agricultural demonstrations oriented towards the promotion of modern and traditional agricultural technologies, implemented by the Dry Zone Agricultural Development Project (DZADP) in two dry zone districts. There are 502 demonstrations including perennials, annuals and livestock have been set up from 2001/2002 *maha* season to 2002/2003 *maha* season. The objectives of the study were, identifying the strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations on an effective process in establishing and using demonstrations for transfer of technology.

A social survey and field observation on forty-four demonstration sites were conducted selected through stratified random sampling. In addition focus group discussions with thirty-two officers involved in setting up these demonstrations were also conducted. Data analysis was done using SPSS computer software.

The majority of respondents (86%) were full-time farmers while thirty one per cent were females. The technologies promoted were found to be appropriate within the dry zone context except for a poultry breed. Even though the appropriate technologies had been promoted, the dissemination of technology to other farmers was observed to be poor. Nearly half of demonstrations (53%) have not properly utilized in this regard. Poor supply of planting materials/ breeds and technical advice were the commonly mentioned weaknesses. The record keeping was very poor except for few farmers (5%) who had maintained good records.

Based on the index developed using five important process variables, the success of the demonstrations was found to be independent of variables such as education, number of training programs attended, farming status, and irrigation source. However there is a positive correlation between the number of training programs attended by the demonstration farmer and number of follower farmers visited the demonstration. The proportion of successful demonstrations was comparatively higher in Hambantota district whereas average quality demonstrations were higher in Anuradhapura.