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Use of non-chemical pest management practices in vegetable cultivation: a case study in Hambanthota district

G K N R Jayawardena and M Wijeratne*

Department of Agric. Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya

Among all food crops, vegetable yield losses are higher due to pests, since they are perishable. Integrated pest management is one alternative to minimize the disadvantages resulting from chemical methods. This study, focused on major pests, main non-chemical pest control methods and scientific reasons of such methods in vegetable family *cucurbitacea*. *Uddakandara, Magama* and *Ranakeliya* Grama Niladhari divisions in *Hambanthota* district were selected under purposive sampling technique.

Primary data were gathered by conducting a field survey. A structured questionnaire has been employed as a data gathering tool. Through analyzing data, following results were obtained. The major pest of the cucubitaceous crops is fruit fly (*Dacus cucurbitacea*). Moreover, aphid (*Aphis gossypii)*, ephilachna (*Ephilachna spp.*) and leaf minor (*Liriomyza sativa)* also identified as pests in this crop. As non chemical pest control methods, destruction of damaged plant parts/ whole plant, hanging pieces of yellow polythene after applying grease, and ploughing the field time to time are the main non-chemical pest control methods used in this area. The scientific reasons of the each non-chemical control method also discussed in this study.

* mahinda1@sltnet.lk Tel: 041 2292200