

## Harvesting and drying practices of Clove (*Eugenia caryophyllus*) in Ukuwela Divisional Secretariat Division in the Matale District

K M M W D K K Narampanawe<sup>1\*</sup> and M A P K Seneviratne<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Agricultural Extension, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya

<sup>2</sup> In-Service Training Centre, Department of Export Agriculture, Elwala, Ukuwela

Harvesting and drying of clove (*Eugenia caryophyllus*) are considered as costly operations. The study was aimed to identify harvesting methods of clove, problems related to harvesting and drying and make recommendations to overcome the existing constraints. The selected area for the study was Ukuwela Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD) in Matale district covering 355 hectares of clove. Ukuwela DSD has three Agrarian Service Centre (ASC) areas including Tenna, Elkaduwa and Ukuwela which have 40%, 30% and 30% of extent under clove respectively. For the study 24, 18, 18 clove growers were selected randomly from Tenna, Elkaduwa and Ukuwela respectively proportionate to land extent. Altogether 60 clove growers were interviewed. Field survey was conducted during the months of May, June and July 2004. Ninety per cent of respondents have directly harvested their clove produce by means of either hired labour or by themselves. The rest leased out their trees for harvesting. Among the direct harvesters 61.1% sought assistance of hired labours. Among the harvesters who hired labours, 67.4% paid wages on daily basis while the rest paid wages on weight (Kg) basis. Removal of buds with two leaves was the common method of harvesting (80%). Farmers who adopted recommended harvesting (picking only clusters of flower buds) were limited to 15%. Approximately, 54% of the respondents tended to sell their harvest in fresh form, or let the crop be on the tree without harvesting during rainy seasons. Nearly 6% of respondents used artificial light (electric bulbs) while 7.4% used fuel wood for drying. Direct heating using fuel wood deteriorates quality of clove due to contamination with smoke. Major constraints of harvesting identified in the Ukuwela Divisional Secretariat Division were high labour cost, difficulties in harvesting the buds present at the top of the tree, limited harvesting hours, damages of branches while being harvested and difficulty in drying during rainy season. To overcome the damages due to careless harvesting due to leasing of the crop, it is advisable to harvest by owners themselves or employing labours under supervision of the owner. Making awareness of farmers about advantages of correct harvesting technique will result in increase of the future yields. Artificial drying would be a better solution for insufficient and prolong drying due to rains.