

Employability of Agriculture graduates who graduated from Sri Lankan Universities during the period 1998-2002

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A study was conducted to analyse the employability status of agriculture graduates who had entered the job market in the period of 1998-2001 from the seven universities in Sri Lanka. The mail survey was carried out in three consecutive studies in years 2001, 2003 and 2004 and the targeted group consisted of 1,515 graduates. The sample consisted of 52% of the target group.

According to the survey, the employment rate of the graduates varied in the three respective years surveyed. In the year 2003, the employment rate has decreased to 47.6% from 75.5% in the year 2001. However, this has increased again to 70% in year 2004. The unemployment rate has increased from 15% in 2001 to 43% in 2002, but this has decreased again to 19% in year 2004.

The employment rate of the graduates showed variation according to the subject areas they specialised. According to the results in the year 2002, the highest employment rate (67%) was recorded for the graduates who followed Agriculture Extension as a special subject, followed by the graduates specialising in the area of Animal Science (58%), Agriculture Engineering (58%), Agriculture Economics (53%), Food Science and Technology (49%), Crop Science (41%) and Agriculture Biology (34%). In year 2004, this pattern shifted a little and the highest employment rate was recorded for the graduates, who specialised in the area of Food Science and Technology (96%), Agriculture Extension (90%), Agriculture Economics (80%), Animal Science (78%), Crop Science (62%), Soil Science (60%) and Agriculture Biology (29%). Both studies showed that the highest demand in labour market was for the graduates who specialised in Agriculture Extension, Food Science and Technology, Agriculture Economics and Animal Science. The lowest demand in the labour market was recorded for the graduates specialised in the area of Agriculture Biology, Soil Science and Crop Science. The study was also extended to investigate the income level of the employed graduates, sector of employment and their job categories.

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