

**Practices of grading and marketing of clove (*Eugenia caryophyllus*) in
Ukuwela Divisional Secretariat Division in Matale district**

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The aim of the study was to identify the grading and marketing methods (form of selling, time of marketing, sales avenues) of cloves at domestic levels, reasons for non-grading and problems related to these practices. Among the clove growing areas in Sri Lanka, Matale has the third largest land extent (1132ha). 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 Tenna, Elkaduwa and Ukuwela, which have respectively 40%, 30% and 30% of extent under clove. For the study 24, 18, 18 clove growers were selected randomly from Tenna, Elkaduwa and Ukuwela respectively proportionate to the land extent. Altogether 60 clove growers were interviewed. Field survey was conducted during the months of May, June and July 2004.

The stalks, immature cloves, clove flowers in bloom, fermented cloves and damaged buds need to be separated from quality products. Half of the respondents graded their cloves. The rest (46%) did not grade their products. Reasons for not grading were narrow price gap between the graded and non graded products (48%), disinterest (40%), and lack of knowledge on correct method of grading (4%). There were instances where separation of stalks was practiced in unhygienic places. Half of the respondents sold clove produce in dry form. Nearly 11% sold in fresh form while 40% of the respondents sold in both dry and fresh forms. Forty six percent of respondents sold their cloves at the prevailing market price whereas 11% sold as soon as harvested. Majority of the respondents (72%) sold their produce to Matale spice collecting centres expecting higher prices.

Grading of clove is an insignificant practice among clove growers in this area due to low price gap. Hygienic handling, adequate drying and use of proper storage have to be promoted to increase microbial qualities. One solution for these weaknesses is to introduce processing centres where good practices can be performed to yield a quality product.

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