

## Farmer perceptions of farmer institutions: A case study

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The non plantation sector in Sri Lanka, is suffering from low productivity, low investments, and also a high dependent population. Many efforts have been taken to improve the living standard of this sector through agricultural productivity enhancement. Farmer Organisations (FO) were institutionalised to fortify the process of development. However, in the national context, this policy has not rendered benefit to the efforts and investment made. Hence, this study attempts to reveal farmer perceptions of the activities of FOs.

Walawe left bank in Ridiyagama irrigation scheme was selected as the study location. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 75 farmers: 35 farmers from FOs, 24 from farmer companies, and 16 from agricultural productivity societies. Data were collected using a pre- tested questionnaire during September to October; 2005. The study revealed that the farmers are satisfied with the contribution of FOs for water sharing activities such as the amount of water received, fairness of distribution, and timeliness. However, the canal maintenance is at an unsatisfied level. The contribution for input supply, credit facilities, quality seed production, and awareness programmes were impressive. Farmers were unsatisfied on activities such as maintenance contracts and farm mechanisation handled by FOs. Contribution for the agri-business and product marketing activities and the paddy purchasing programme were not adequate. The study reveals that the FOs in Ridiyagama area perform at a moderate satisfactory level but there is a potential for further improvement.

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