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**Profitability of rice based cropping system in Jaffna district of Sri Lanka**

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The study was conducted in Jaffna district of Sri Lanka during October to December 2004 to evaluate the present rice based cropping system in terms of its profitability. Sample farmers were selected randomly from 5 Agrarian Service Centres (ASC) such as Uduvil, Tholpuram, Chavakachcheri, Ampan and Puloly ASC divisions where rice based cropping system in practice. Selected sample farmers were interviewed by using questionnaire. In Jaffna district, rice is being cultivated in 9000 ha as rain-fed crop in 2004 and out of that nearly 2000 ha of land is cultivated with other field crops after harvest of paddy with the help of lift irrigation from dug wells. In this rice based cropping system, selection of crops, crop sequence, cropping index and profitability varies among different Agrarian Service Centres. It was found that selection of crops, cropping sequence and its index, use of inputs and level of management are the major factors that determines the profitability of the cropping system. Farmers practice different cropping sequences based on the market demand. High price, limited availability of manures and increased labour wages due to scarcity of farm labourers were identified as major problems which intern increased cost of cultivation. Farmers from Uduvil, Tholpuram and Chavakachcheri divisions adopt high cropping intensity (>2) by cultivating more than one crop after paddy harvest in the same field. In Ampan and Puloly divisions, farmers cultivate only one crop after harvesting paddy and cropping index is always two or less than two. This may be due to limitation of quality and quantity of water available for irrigation. It was observed that the profitability of rice based cropping system increased with increasing cropping index in all ASC divisions. Profit obtained from Uduvil ASC division is higher compared to other ASC divisions. Growing vegetables and cash crops give higher profit compared to the legumes and oil seed crops. Profit obtained from rain-fed rice is very much lower than that of vegetables and cash crops followed by rice in this system.

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