

**FACTORS AFFECTING THE QUALITY PEPPER PRODUCTION AMONG
SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN UDUNUWARA DS DIVISION IN KANDY
DISTRICT, SRI LANKA**

S.A.A.S. Perera,¹ J. Weerahewa,² S.N. Dissanayake¹

¹*Department of Agricultural Systems, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University o
Sri Lanka, Puliyankulama, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.*

²*Department of Agriculture Economics and Business Management, Faculty of Agriculture, University of
Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.*

Sri Lankan pepper does not meet the quality standards in the export market and incurs considerable foreign income losses, while a substantial amount of pepper comes from smallholder pepper farmers in Sri Lanka. The objective of the study was to identify the factors affecting the production of pepper (*Piper nigrum*) in compliance with international standards by smallholder farmers. The quality of pepper depends on harvesting and post-harvesting practices, hence an index was developed considering twenty harvesting and post-harvesting practices recommended by International Pepper Community (IPC) to measure the levels of quality maintained by farmers. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire from 60 randomly selected respondents in three agrarian service centers in Udunuwara District Secretariat (DS) division in Kandy district. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regressed using ordinary least square (OLS) technique. The results showed that 26% of farmers maintained the high quality standards, while 68% of farmers maintained moderate quality standards. Results of the linear regression analysis indicated that experience of farmer had a positive significant impact ($p < 0.05$) on quality of pepper and fulltime involvement in other professions negatively affected on the quality of pepper. Further ordinary, secondary and tertiary levels of education had statistically significant negative effects ($p < 0.05$) on quality pepper production at 5% level comparing to the primary education level. These results concluded that level of quality of pepper is increased with the experience of farmer and declined with the increasing education level and employment status, while lower educated fulltime farmers maintain high quality standards. The study findings recommend that policies should be formulated to encourage the production of fulltime farmers and to enhance their knowledge regarding quality maintaining of pepper production.

Key words : Linear Regression, Post-harvesting practices, Smallhold