

Present Status and Farmers' Attitudes Towards Organic Agriculture: A Case Study in Jaffna Peninsula, Sri Lanka

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The scope of switching towards organic farming in the Jaffna peninsula could readily be expanded for health concerns among the people as well as increased environmental awareness. In this regard, a questionnaire survey was conducted from March to June 2023 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, to identify the present status and farmers' attitudes towards organic farming. The primary data were collected from a sample consisting of 100 farmers who have experience in the application of organic inputs using a stratified random sampling technique. The data were assessed through descriptive statistics by using the SPSS computer software package. The survey revealed that organic inputs are being judiciously used in the Jaffna district: A 12% of the farmers cultivated crops using only organic inputs, while the balance 88% integrated organic and synthetic inputs in cultivation. Although the major reasons for the farmers to use organic inputs were the banning of the importation of synthetic chemicals by the government of Sri Lanka and the subsequent increase of their prices, the farmers had positive attitudes towards organic farming due to the benefits on health and environment aspects, consumer preference, market availability and as a sustainable agriculture system. Besides, great potential, production issues, less social recognition and less institutional support and organic certification were identified as the major challenges faced by the farmers in the Jaffna peninsula. The study also identified that the knowledge of organic farming concepts was low in the farming community. Therefore, introducing certification processes, and providing institutional support and awareness of organic farming will foster sustainable agriculture among farmers in the Jaffna peninsula.

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