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RESEARCH NEWS

ENHANCEMENT OF INCOME OF TOMATO FARMERS THROUGH YAYA DEMONSTRATION APPROACH

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Tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum* Mill) is one of the most popular, economically valued vegetables in Sri Lanka. The extent and the average national yield is 5989 ha and 8.6 t/ha, respectively and the potential yield of the recommended varieties is more than 20 t/ha. However, farmers have failed to realize the yield potential mainly due to non-adoption of recommended cultural and agronomic practices. Therefore, with the objectives of demonstrating the yield potential of the recommended and promising varieties of tomato and to show the possibility of obtaining high yields with good quality fruits at low cost of production, field demonstrations were established in *yala* seasons during 2002 to 2005 in farmers' fields of five villages in Matale district. The varieties used in this study were Rajitha, Rashmi, Maheshi and HF 02. Each demonstration block was about 0.2 ha and a total of 78 farmers participated. A portion of demonstration was managed according to the recommendations of the Department of Agriculture. Field adjacent to the demonstration plots was managed according to farmers' own practices. The yields of the demonstration plots and farmer plots were recorded. Many farmers did not apply recommended quantities of pesticides and fertilizers. They did not follow cultural practices such as stacking, harvesting at correct maturity and proper grading of the harvest. Each season the yields of demonstration plots were 50 % (23.8-56.2 t/ha) higher than that of farmer managed plots. The average farm gate price of tomato during the experimental period was Rs.20-25 per kg. The average net profit of the farmers involved in demonstrations was about Rs.90,000.00 per 0.2 ha and the cost of production was about Rs.8.40 per kg. However, in farmer plots the average net profit was about Rs.32,000.00 and cost of production was about Rs.12.5 per kg. Therefore, the results of the four seasons clearly showed that reduction in cost of production and enhancement in income could be easily achieved if the farmers adopt the recommendations prescribed by the Department of Agriculture.