

More money from pineapple: Knowledge and information contributions

Sri Lankan pineapple, despite being an orphan crop, has proved lucrative. Industry experts often say that Sri Lankan pineapples are among the best in the world. Currently, Sri Lanka ranks 37th among the world's pineapple producers.

The shortage of healthy pineapple suckers, high cost of production particularly due to fertiliser, lack of established best practices and shortage of land for pineapple production are identified as the biggest problems faced by producers. These issues in turn affect the exporters and processors who are plagued by insufficient and unreliable supply.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a database of pineapple plant/slip suppliers

Create the conditions for growers to converge on a set of best practices

Use classifieds in an optimal manner to match demand and supply for land suitable for pineapple growth

Move to an out-grower model

Develop the organic pineapple market

Establishing a database of pineapple sucker suppliers with a reputation system:

Currently the search time for healthy suckers by new growers is, on average, six weeks. In addition most new growers have to depend on the expertise of existing growers to help them identify healthy suckers. While it is understood that no cultivation in Sri Lanka is completely devoid of disease, a reputation system can help identify scrupulous suppliers from others while reducing search costs and time.

Create the conditions for growers to converge on a set of best practices

Pineapple growers in Sri Lanka predominantly learn from each other, in absence of extension services. Practices widely differ. Furthermore they differ widely from the top pineapple growing countries. These variations have negative effects on the productivity of Sri Lankan pineapple cultivation.

Use classified advertising (electronic as well as print) in an optimal manner to match

demand for and supply of land for pineapple cultivation

It is commonly believed that cultivating pineapple "scorches" the land therefore mass media can be used to educate potential suppliers of land. In addition, classified advertising, conventional print as well as electronic (e.g., TradeNet), should be used to match land owners and growers.

Move to an out-grower model

The issues of reliability of supply can be addressed to a large extent through an out-grower model. Here, the buyer would supply inputs and technical advice and guarantee purchase of all produce.

Develop the organic pineapple market

The cost of production of Sri Lankan pineapples is high and this is mainly due to the cost of fertiliser. Organic pineapple cultivation will reduce the cost of production and in addition organic products yield a price premium. Strict implementation of certification and traceability will be necessary.