

EVENT REPORT

Market Knowledge Transfer Program for Export Potential Farmers in Jaffna District

1st & 2nd November 2018
Tilko City Hotel
Jaffna, Sri Lanka.



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Introduction

Agriculture was the main livelihood for many people in Sri Lanka. But farmers abandoned farming and new generations are not interested in farming as a career for so many reasons. Employment rate in Agriculture sector declined from 33.1% to 27.1% within 2011 to 2016 period. (Economic Statistics of Sri Lanka 2016, Central bank). Historically, Sri Lanka has been an agricultural economy where agriculture accounted for more than 50% of the total Gross Domestic Production (GDP). The percentage contribution of Agriculture sector (cumulative of agriculture, livestock and fisheries) to GDP is gradually declined past few years. (Central Bank Report 2016) Industrial and service sector growth is significant when comparing with the agriculture sector.

LIRNEasia in association with Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust (NTT), conducting a research program to promotes participatory knowledge sharing processes and social integration among fruit & vegetable farmers who willing to connect to export value chains in the North and South.

This research study is basically to uplift the livelihood of farmers by linking them to the export value chain as well as reconciliation between South and North. Before the civil conflict in Sri Lanka there was a solid bond between the North and the South aside ethnicity.

The aim of this program was to strengthen the market knowledge and productive capacity of fruits and vegetable farmers who were willing to join the export value chain.

The objective of the course was to produce discerning knowledge for fruits and vegetable farmers on export market requirement, quality expectation, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), business and entrepreneurial skills required to become a successful farmer in their area.

Fruits and vegetable farmers who identified in Northern Province from the baseline survey participated to the program. Fruits and vegetable farmers who are already selling their commodities to export market also participated from South.

LIRNEasia

LIRNEasia conducts in-depth, policy-relevant research on infrastructure industries including ICT sectors. Their work extends to other sectors such as agriculture and health, which can benefit the poorest citizens of the Asia Pacific. Through their work, LIRNEasia documents regional good practices and then disseminates independent, actionable knowledge, to policy makers, regulators, service providers and the media. They have, on many occasions, contributed towards the removal of barriers to access to ICTs for the people of Asia.

Neelan Thiruchelvan Trust (NTT)

NTT is the only indigenous grant maker in Sri Lanka, combining human rights and peace building initiatives throughout the country. As an independent and autonomous local organization, NTT has the opportunity to work more flexibly with individuals and communities at various levels in society, in a variety of geographical settings, on a wide array of issues. Given its expertise and networks, the NTT is able to provide additional support to target groups, which goes well beyond financial assistance and grants.

Event Participants

More than 40 participants representing farmers, resource persons and stake holders participated to the event.

Table 1: Participants of the event

Name	
Prof S.J.Yogarajah	University of Kelaniya
Dr Uthayashanker Thayasivum	University of Moratuwa
Mr. Kulendran Sivaram	Ministry of Agriculture
Mr. Naguleshwaran	Nutri Food Packers
Mr. Somakanthan	Postharvest Agriculture Institute
Mr. G. Satheesan	Sri Ghan Exports
Mr. Suthaharan Perampalam	Colombo - LIRNEasia
Ms. Samali Perera	Colombo - LIRNEasia
Mr. K. Nimal Ratnayake	Farmer-Gampaha
Mr. U.D. Amila Kumara	Farmer-Gampaha
Mr. D.L. Amal Delgoda	Farmer-Gampaha
Mr. W. Soamaratne	Farmer-Gampaha
Mr. W.N.Rathnasiri	Farmer-Gampaha
Ms. R. Rajeswary	Farmer- North

Mr. Piranavan	Farmer- North
Mr. T. Sivananthangah	Farmer- North
Mr. P. Rasu	Farmer- North
Mr. S. Shanmugam	Farmer- North
Mr. A. Annathurai	Farmer- North
Mr. P. Varathalingam	Farmer- North
Mr. Suntharesan	Farmer- North
Mr. Muththan	Farmer- North
Mr. K. Mohanarasa	Farmer- North
Mr. K. Thillainathan	Farmer- North
Mr. M. Varatharasa	Farmer- North
Mr. K. Sukunavel	Farmer- North
Mr. K. Kugunesan	Farmer- North
Mr. S. Sokkalingam	Farmer- North
Mr. S. Ranjith Kumar	Farmer- North
Mr. S. Sivaselvanesan	Farmer- North
Mr. P. Nagendraraja	Farmer- North
Mr. K. Ganeshalingam	Farmer- North
Mr. T. Sivananthargah	Farmer- North
Mr. U. Kanageshwaran	Farmer- North
Mr. Gunendralingam	Farmer- North
Mr. V. Nadarasa	Farmer- North
Mr. K. Ganesamoorthy	Farmer- North
Mr. S. Sivalingam	Farmer- North

Event Proceedings

Dr Uthayashanker Thayasivum of University of Moratuwa, moderated the event while Prof S.J.Yogarah from University of Kelaniya took a good initiative addressing the gathering about current lifestyle and the self-satisfaction of farmers. He delivered a speech on becoming a successful export oriented farmer later on too. Mr. Kulendran Sivaram of Ministry of Agriculture explained the current situation of agriculture all over the country and he highlighted the opportunities and the key challenges for North and East.

Mr. Naguleshwaran from “Nutri Food Packers” talked on the Transformation of Agricultural Produces into diversified Value Added Products. Mr. Somakanthan from Post-harvest Agriculture Institute delivered momentous speech for farmers on post-harvest handling of fruits and vegetables and opportunities in export market. A Leading exporter in Ghana, Mr. G. Satheesan who is a Sri Lankan addressed the gathering. He shared his vast knowledge on farming with new technologies. He would start exporting agricultural commodities based on Northern province in Sri Lanka too. It was a great privilege for the farmers to meet him.

The documentary video on the bond between Sinhala Traders and Tamil Farmers before conflict of civil war was shown to enroot the interrelationship between North and the South.

Southern Farmers also encouraged Jaffna farmers sharing their knowledge on the export-oriented farming and GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) practices

The following day (2nd of November 2018) Farmers from the South had visited the farms in Jaffna. The farmers shared their practical knowledge and the experience in this visit.

Table 2: Workshop proceedings

Time	Program
8.30am – 9.00 am	Registration
9.00am – 9.10 am	Welcome
9.10am - 9.20 am	Introduction & importance of the Program
9.20am – 9.35 am	Address by Official invitee (TBD)
9.40am - 10.20 am	Importance of Agriculture in North & Reason to Consider Exports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented by: Kulendran Sivaram (Agriculture Department)
10.20am – 10.40am	Tea break
10.40am - 11.30pm	How to become Successful Export Farmer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stories by Leading Exporters / What is ideal product / Expectations from Exporters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr.Naguleshwaran (Nutri Food Packers) Mr.Nithyaraja (Bio Tech) Mr. G. Satheesan (SriGhan)
11.30am - 11.50am	Challenges: Faced by Export Potential Farmers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of Key Survey Results : Suthaharan Perampalam Issues faced by Farmers in Jaffna : Voice of Attendees
11.50am – 12.30am	How did we succeed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stories of export farmers travelling from South
12.30pm – 1.10 am	Lunch
1.10pm – 2.10 pm	Reconciliation Video : Trade Relationship that exist between North & South <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screening of Video Moderated by: Dr. Uthyashankar Thayasivam (University of Moratuwa)
2.10 pm – 3.10pm	Entrepreneurship & Winning Mind Set to become successful farmer (Addressing Skills Gap) Presented by: Prof.Yogarajah (University of Kelaniya)
3.10pm– 3.30am	Tea break
4.15pm – 4.50pm	Ideal Post-Harvest Techniques (Packing / Storage/ Transport/ Presented by: Mr. Narayanasamy Somakanthan Research Officer Institute of Post Harvest Technology (IPHT)
4.50pm – 5.00pm	Feedback & Evaluation

Evaluations

The participants rated the sessions and speakers at the course on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being abysmal and 5 being excellent. All the sessions and speakers received good ratings from the participants. (See Figure 1 and 2)

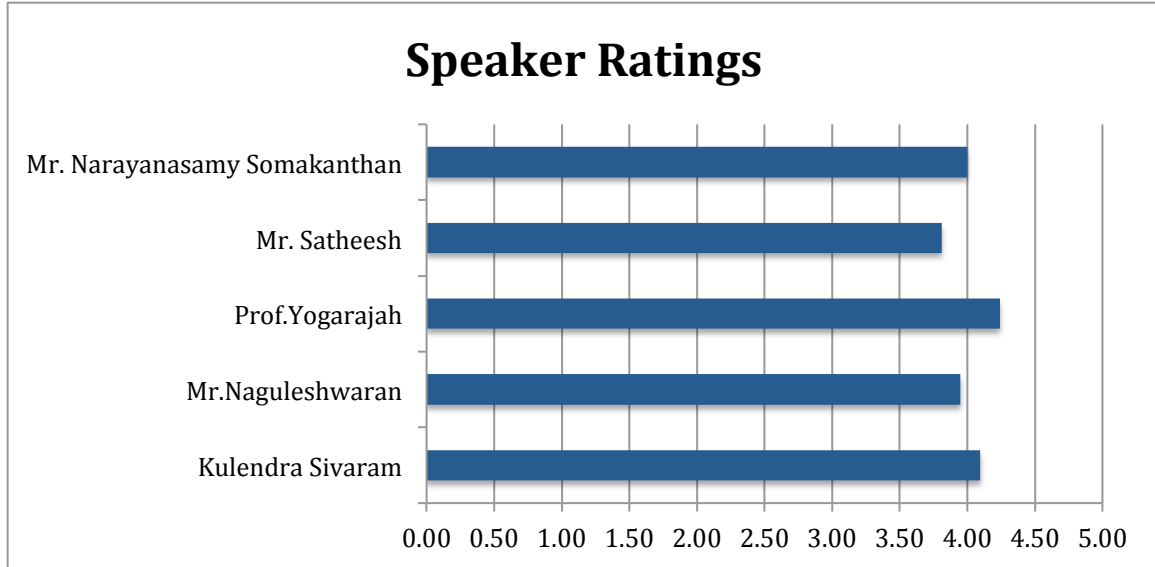


Figure 1: Speaker Ratings

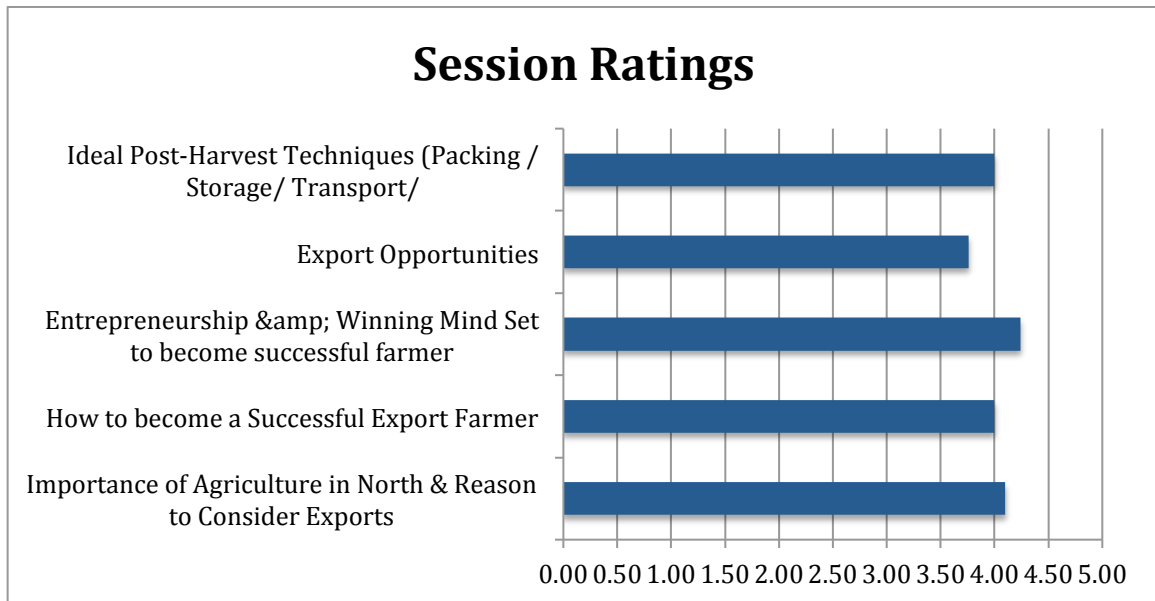


Figure 2: Session Ratings