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Improvement Needs to Promote Scientific Agricultural Practices in Agroforestry Home Gardens with Special Reference to Weligama, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Agroforestry home gardens are production models with high diversity. It has become a hotspot in scientific research because only few studies have attempted to review scientific agroforestry practices. Therefore, the present study attempts to find out improvement needs to promote scientific practices in agroforestry home gardens with special reference to Weligama Divisional Secretariat (DS), Sri Lanka. Currently ongoing “Haritha Dayak” home gardening development project conducted by Ministry of Agriculture in this area. Three Grama Niladari (GN) divisions were selected through reconnaissance survey conducted with agriculture instructors based on the availability of the highest number of agroforestry home gardens. The primary data were collected from randomly selected 30 households from each GN division (n=90) by personal interviews through the use of a structured questionnaire. Their concern on improvement needs to promote scientific agriculture practices was measured by 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 where 1=Not concern, 5=highly concern. Descriptive and Wilcoxon signed rank test analysis were used to analysis data. The results revealed that majority of households have highly concern on market opportunities (40%), access to off farm employment (36.7%) and contribution to household economy (48.9%). Households pay moderate concern on access to quality agricultural inputs (43.3%) and opportunity to improve scientific knowledge (42%) and not concern (42.2%) about research and development on scientific agricultural practices of agroforestry home gardens. Access to market, access to off-farm employment, contribution to household economic/Production objective are significant ($p < 0.01$) with highly concern. There is significant ($p < 0.01$) difference between availability of research and development on scientific basis of agroforestry home garden and not concern. There is no significant ($p > 0.01$) difference between access to agriculture input and moderate concern. This study promotes the need for strong national policy and more research which emphasis scientific agricultural practices in agroforestry home gardens.

Keywords: Home garden, Scientific practices, Strategies, Market