

Fruit Export in Sri Lanka: A Sector Assessment

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Abstract

Sri Lanka produces around 540,000 metric tons of fruits annually and exports fresh and processed varieties to many countries including United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Maldives and India. The data related to the fruit export are generally available at separate organizations and institutes such as Export Development Board (EDB), Central Bank, Department of Sri Lanka Customs etc. However, sector assessment of fruit export is hardly performed, thus reliable information on the performance of the sector is lacking. This study was aimed at performing an overall assessment of fruit export in Sri Lanka. Five randomly selected leading fruit exporters were interviewed and relevant data were collected by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was basically focused on identifying the constraints faced by sector. The secondary data related to fruit export were collected from the annual reports of Central Bank, Department of Sri Lanka Customs, EDB, Department of Census and Statistics. Simple tabular and time series analysis were employed in analyzing the data. Fruit export sector has recorded a remarkable growth (249.32 %) during the last decade (from 2003 to 2012). The sector reported an annual growth of 34.46 % for the year 2011/12. Though banana is found to be the key contributor, fruits such as melon, papaya, tamarind and goraka have also provided a substantial contribution to the export sector. Unacceptable quality of fruits is reported to be the major constraint faced by the sector. Therefore, attention must be paid on the improvement of quality of export fruits in order to ensure continuous development of the sector.

Key words: *Fruit export, sector assessment, constraints*

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