

Problems and prospects of mushroom cultivation in Akuressa and Kamburupitiya DS Divisions

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Abstract

Mushroom cultivation is considered as a profitable agribusiness and has greater relevance to the rural development. The various problems encountered in this industry have not been discussed enough. The current investigation was carried out in order to address problems and prospects of mushroom cultivation in two DS divisions in Matara, Akuressa and Kamburupitiya. Forty mushroom growers (MG) were selected from *Kamburupitiya* and *Akuressa* DS Divisions and primary data were collected by a field survey using a questionnaire while personal interviews and systematic field observations were also done. It was found that 53% of the respondents belong to the age group between 41-60 years. Female involvement in the industry was 55%. Among interviewed cultivators 52% was engaged full time in this industry. Majority of the farmers involved in the cultivation in small scale using mainly family labour (92%) and expecting only a secondary income (80%). Identified major constraints were pest and disease problems, low quality and less availability of spawns, high initial investment, and high costs of raw materials. There is no marketing problem for the product. Most of the respondents (60%) do not have any idea of post harvest technologies. Forty nine percent of the respondents believe that they encounter some allergic reactions due to mushroom spores. The cultivators expect to receive training on pests and diseases management, proper cultivation practices and value addition in order to expand their production. Average monthly production in these two areas was 178 bags per person. The average gross margin per bag was Rs. 37.00. The income gain from the enterprise to supplement the family income, availability of inputs, interest of the growers and market potential are positive factors of the enterprise if the problems encountered in the production process is properly addressed.

Keywords: gross margin, farmer organizations, mushroom cultivation, problems and prospects, profitability