

## **Exploring the Constraints Faced by Stakeholders in the Value Chain of Organic Fertilizer in the North-Western Province of Sri Lanka**

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Production to bypass the increasing demand of organic food products has become a challenge, because ‘organic fertilizer supply’ is not tally with the demand. This paper examines the stakeholder perceptions on key constraints they faced through the organic fertilizer value chain with special reference to the North-Western province of Sri Lanka. A personal interview-oriented survey was carried out with 140 stakeholders and selected using ‘purposive sampling’, including producers, stakeholders in value addition sector, storage facility providers, wholesalers, retailers, farmers and extension service providers using a semi-structured questionnaire comprised of 10-point likert-scale supported 25 constraints as attitudinal statements. The scores provided on the scale were subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis technique to test for their ‘validity’ and then Aggregated Mean Scores were derived. The Cronbach’s alpha value was used to test the ‘reliability’ and it was 0.74. The results revealed that those constraints can be catalogued objectively into 08 key factors as: Market, Technical, Production, Health & Environment, Financial, Human Resources, Institutional, and Government. Majority of stakeholders were largely affected by the first three factors, i.e. ‘Market’ [Wholesalers (7.82), Value addition sector (7.47), Storage facility providers (7.33)]; ‘Technical’ [Extension service providers (8.87), Producers (7.47), Retailers (7.46)], and ‘Production’ [Farmers (7.02)]. Overall, the results highlight that, to create an effective mechanism that minimizes the effect of those constraints identified, setting novel technology-oriented production facilities with high market accessibility and differentiation of ‘organic’ from others in the market (e.g. certification, labelling etc.), regular monitoring, and regulatory enforcement is warranted to safeguard the industry.

**Key words:** *Constraints, organic fertilizer, stakeholder perceptions*

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