

## FARMER RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT IN SYSTEM 'H' OF MAHAWELI

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was conducted to assess as to how farmers in the System 'H' of Mahaweli, an area with relatively well developed infrastructure, have responded to changes occurred in the agricultural production environment during the period from Yala 1989 to Yala 2001. Paddy was excluded from this study, as paddy is not cultivated in large extents in Yala due to low availability of irrigation water.*

*Time -trend analysis indicated that certain crops have lost their popularity while some other crops have gained it over time. As information available at the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, Thambuththegama was insufficient to explain the farmer behavior, information related to cost of cultivation and profitability of crops were examined. A new ratio called the profitability ratio was computed to assess profitability of crops. Results revealed that the crops gained popularity were the crops with less marketing problems and have attractive financial returns.*

*Farmers also have adopted improved production technologies such as the use of hybrids, nursery raising of seedlings of cucurbitaceae, pruning and training of vines and use of liquid fertilizer, which gave high financial returns.*

*Increasing production efficiency, selling farm produce at high prices and purchasing production inputs at low prices would enhance profitability in agriculture. Improved production technologies will raise production efficiency while integrated pest management, organic manure and bulk purchasing of inputs would help in bringing down the cost of production. Furthermore encouraging farmers to sell their produce as a group would enable them to obtain relatively high prices.*

**Keywords** : Farmer response, production environment, cost of production, profitability ratio, trend analysis.