

Awareness of and Adoption to the Recommended Management Practices of Big Onion Growers (Case Study in Dambulla D.S. Division)

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Big onion is considered as an important cash crop in Sri Lanka. Within few decades big onion production has increased significantly along with the increasing demand for consumption. Though the production has increased, productivity is not satisfactory as average of 17 MT/ha where the potential productivity lies at 30-37 MT/ha. Therefore, it is imperative to study the knowledge level of the farmers and their adoption behavior regarding the recommended cultivation practices. Sixty five big onion growers who have not less than 5 years of big onion farming experience were interviewed in Dambulla D.S. division. Sample was selected randomly and data were collected using structured questionnaire. Total of 17 DOA recommended practices were considered initially but only 7 management practices were shown correlation with the level of awareness and adoption status. Therefore those practices viz use of recommended varieties, nursery sterilization procedure, seed treatment, spacing, seedling treatment, pre emergence herbicide application, correct harvesting stage and providence of optimum storage conditions were considered for further analysis. Results reveal that awareness on pre emergence herbicides and optimum harvesting stage has reported comparatively higher and they are 98.5% and 89% respectively. When considering the adoption, 76.9% of the respondents reported that they did not keep spacing while transplanting. Though the respondents have high awareness on optimum harvesting stage, only 27.7% well adopted to practice it. Factors affecting adoption are analyzed by using a multiple linear regression model and 5 factors were found significant. Respondent's age and off farm employment negatively affect the adoption level whilst education level, big onion farming experience and community leadership have no impact on adoption. According to the results it can be suggested that, though the farmers have sufficient knowledge on pre emergence herbicide application, correct harvesting stage and optimum storage conditions, majority has not at all adopted to those practices. Ultimately, it causes serious market based issues.

Keywords: Adoption level, Awareness, Big onion, Management practices