

Examining the Market Orientation of Vegetable Farmers in Uva Province, Sri Lanka

E.M.C.C.B. Ekanayake*, M.G.P.P. Mahindaratne and A.M.C. Amarakoon

Department of Export Agriculture, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has a long history of cultivating vegetables. There are two types of vegetables cultivating in Sri Lanka namely upcountry vegetables and low country vegetables which are varied according to agro-ecological adaptability. In the country, most of the small scale and medium scale farmers are involved in vegetable cultivation. The market orientation is the understanding of customers' wants and needs and meeting them profitably. To become market-oriented, the vegetable farmers have to meet the customers and to be educated about their requirements. But practically there is less possibility for vegetable farmers to meet the buyers due to the number of intermediaries in the vegetable supply chain and farmers are rarely practicing direct marketing. In this context, there is a suspicion that whether the vegetable farmers have a proper understanding of customer requirements. Accordingly, this research was designed to identify the factors affecting the market orientation where the market orientation of vegetable farmers was measured using the MKTOR scale. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used in the study and 123 farmers from the upcountry and 141 farmers from the low country were randomly interviewed in their fields. Multiple linear regression was employed in data analysis. According to regression results, machinery availability, financial availability, attitudes towards market orientation, subjective norms about market orientation and the perceived behavioural control for market orientation significantly affected on the market orientation of upcountry vegetable farmers and land size of cultivation, attitude towards market orientation, subjective norms about market orientation and the perceived behavioural controls for market orientation significantly identified as factors affecting the market orientation of low country vegetable farmers in the Uva province.

Keywords: Market orientation, Vegetable farmers, Attitudes, Subjective norms, Perceived behavioural controls, MKTOR scale