

## **Compliance to International Food Safety Regulations: In Tea Small Holding Sector with Special Reference to Kandy District, Sri Lanka**

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Tea is the second most popular drink in the world after water. Although Sri Lanka has been producing and exporting tea for over 125 years, sufficient attention has not been paid to marketing aspects of tea. The percentage of value addition has to be gradually increased to augment the profit. Assurance of quality is a form of quality insurance which guarantees production quality and safety standards to consumers. The subject of food safety has at present caused a great concern, from recent past Japan and European Union have stipulated the Maximum Residue Level (MRL) for various pesticides in tea. Therefore, efforts have to be made to avoid all possible ways of build-up of residues in made tea.

The study was aimed to assess the current situation of pesticide application in tea small holding sector with respect to international food safety regulations of tea –MRL and to identify the causes for non adoption of recommended practices on MRL. A questionnaire based survey was carried out to collect the data from random sample of 45 tea small holders in Kandy district. The level of adoption of MRL and the relationship between the level of adoption and other explanatory variables were determined.

Result revealed that the adoption of recommended practices on MRL of tea small holders was significantly varied with the farming experience, education level of tea small holder, awareness on MRL and use of hired labour for tea farming. The most important constraints perceived by tea small holders are lack of information on MRL and lack of labour.

**Key words:** International Food Safety Regulations, Maximum Residue Level, Adoption, Recommended practices on MRL