

**COMPLIANCE TO INTERNATIONAL FOOD
SAFETY REGULATIONS: IN THE TEA INDUSTRY
OF
SRI LANKA**

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ABSTRACT

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. In addition to conventional tea production, the percentage of value addition has to be gradually increased to cater the changing global consumer requirements. Assurance of quality is a form of value addition to tea, 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 which are used in tea fields. Therefore our concerted 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 tea industry (in the field level) with respect to international food safety regulations of tea – MRL and to identify the barriers that inhibit the 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 and 15 tea estates in Kandy district. Descriptive statistical analyze method was used to determine the status of adoption of MRL while Multiple Linear Regression was used to find out the relationship between the level of adoption and other explanatory variables.

Result revealed that the adoption of recommended practices on MRL of tea small holders was significantly determined by the farming experience, education level of tea small holder, awareness on MRL and use of hired labour for tea farming. Further it was revealed that awareness on MRL, working experience of the estate manager and company ownership largely contributes to the process of adoption to the MRL by tea estates. The most important constraints perceived by both tea small holders and estate sector are lack of information on MRL and lack of labour.

Key Words – International Food Safety Regulations, Maximum Residue Level,

Adoption, Recommended practices on MRL