

## CURRENT STATUS OF FRUIT CROP SECTOR IN SRI LANKA AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS TOWARDS SMART AGRICULTURE

**Susanthi Nilmini Chandrasena**

Ministry of Agriculture, 80/5, 'GovijanaMandiraya', Rajamalwatta Lane, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka  
*susanthinilminic@gmail.com*

There are more than 100 fruit species grown in Sri Lanka. Of them, major fruit crops are Banana, Pineapple, Papaya, Mango, Rambutan, Durian, Guava, Citrus and Avocado. Greater diversity in agro climatic conditions in the country has offered a huge potential of growing large number of fruit species. Total extent and gross production of the fruit sector in the country is about 250,000 ha and 1,000,000 Mt respectively. Its contribution to the GDP is about 0.6%.

Development of more than 60 varieties from 28 fruit species, integrated pest management packages, mobile apps, findings in value addition, high density planting, fertigation, rainwater harvesting, agroforestry and use of renewable energy are some achievements in fruit research and development in the country during the recent past. Low productivity, highly erratic production, high pre- and post-harvest losses, low quality of the products and lack of organized markets are the major constraints in the fruit sector. Hence the government policies are now focusing on organizing small scale fruit growers as clusters, establishment of commercial cultivation of high priority crops in suitable agro-climatic zones following advanced management packages, increasing availability of high quality planting materials, development/introduction of advanced management practices for high priority crops, increasing availability of inputs in reasonable price, introducing machineries required for orchard management and value addition, facilitation to implement island wide surveillance programs for Fruit flies in order to unlock the export potential and development of crop based formal linkages for value chain actors of fruit crops. Future directions towards embracing smart agriculture include establishment of VHT facilities for export fruits for high end markets and certification of the entire supply chain up to exit point to assure the commodity is produced as per the importing countries phyto-sanitary requirements and to ensure the traceability when exporting perishables to high end markets.

Keywords: Fruit species, Varieties, Diversity