

COMMODITIES

SPICES

Downward trend

The downward trend in spice exports experienced during the first quarter of 1978 continued into the second quarter of the year with cinnamon and cloves being most affected. Exports of these two commodities further dwindled by 10 percent and 72 percent respectively in comparison to the same period in 1977. Cardamoms, nutmeg and mace however performed better. Total spice exports during April — June 1978 declined by 25 percent over the same period last year.

January to June this year. Pepper exports during the first half of 1978 amounted to 677 metric tons. This is a significant achievement compared with the same period in 1977, when pepper exports were negligible. An improvement in the local pepper crop together with an increased availability of red chillies (for which pepper is a substitute) thus reducing local consumption of pepper to a minimum were two factors responsible for this favourable increase. Cloves and cinnamon on the other hand registered declines of 59 percent and 26 percent in quantities ex-

TABLE 1. EXPORTS OF SPICES JANUARY — JUNE 1978

	April—June 1977	April—June 1978	% over 1977	Jan.—June 1977	Jan.—June 1978	% over 1977
	metric tons	metric tons		metric tons	metric tons	
Cinnamon						
(Quills & Chips)	1237.10	753.45	- 39.90	2718.60	2020.09	- 25.70
Cardamoms	15.30	30.54	+ 100.00	50.90	61.08	+ 20.00
Pepper	—	162.91	—	—	677.09	—
Cloves	330.90	91.64	- 72.30	707.60	290.18	- 59.00
Nutmeg & Mace	10.20	162.91	+ 1500.00	76.40	213.81	+ 180.00
	1593.50	1201.45	- 24.60	3553.50	3263.25	- 8.20

Source: *Customs Returns and Central Bank Monthly Bulletin*

The half yearly performance for all spices, however, registered a smaller decline of only 8 percent over 1977 figures. An improved performance of nutmeg and mace and cardamoms resulted in an increase in the export volume of these commodities by 108 percent and 20 percent respectively during

January—June 1978 reported this year compared to January—June 1977. A poor crop of cloves indicated by the complete absence of this commodity at the Colombo Produce Auctions (except for small quantities on three occasions) was mainly responsible for the poor performance

(Continued on inside back cover).

TABLE II. SPICE EXPORT EARNINGS JANUARY — JUNE 1977—1978

	Jan.—June 1977	Jan.—June 1978	% over 1977	Jan.—June 1977	Jan.—June 1978	% over 1977
	Rs. million	Rs. million		mill. SDRs	million SDRs	
Cinnamon	31.60	59.10	+ 87.00	3.51	3.10	- 11.80
Cardamoms	7.80	17.00	+ 118.00	0.87	0.89	+ 2.80
Pepper	—	20.10	—	—	1.05	—
Cloves	31.70	21.60	- 31.90	3.52	1.13	- 67.90
Nutmeg & Mace	1.20	5.50	+ 358.30	0.13	0.29	+ 116.50
	72.30	123.30	+ 70.50	8.04	6.46	- 19.60

Source: *Customs Returns and Central Bank Monthly Bulletin*