

### Paddy Harvest Records Drop in Maha 1985/86

Paddy production in the Maha 1985/86 is expected to be 1.69 million metric tons or 81 million bushels, according to Department of Census and Statistics estimates. This indicates a decrease of 3.6 percent or 63,000 metric tons compared with the previous Maha paddy production. Paddy production in the Maha 1985/86 is also 11 percent lower than the target production figure of 1.90 million metric tons set for the season by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research. However, 1985/86 Maha paddy production indicates a 25 percent increase compared with the 83/84 Maha which recorded the lowest level of paddy production in recent years for a Maha season. Though the average yield increased, total paddy production in the Maha 1985/86 decreased due to the drop in the extent cultivated as well as harvested.

Paddy production in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in the Maha 1985/86 has faced a severe set back mainly as a result of increasing ethnic disturbances in these provinces and this has contributed to a large extent to the decrease in total paddy production. While paddy production in Kili-nochchi district in the Northern Province decreased by 37.7 percent (15,000 MT), in Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai districts in the Eastern provinces it decreased by 44 percent (41,000 MT), 114 percent (43,000 MT) and 18 percent (30,000 MT) respectively. Had such a big drop in paddy production not taken place in these districts total paddy production would have even increased marginally. In the Maha 1985/86 the highest paddy production of 266,000 metric tons or 16 percent of the total paddy production is recorded from the Kurunegala District as in the case of the

previous Maha; followed by Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Amparai Districts producing 159,000 43,000 and 135,000 metric tons respectively. Jaffna district which produced 71,000 metric tons in the Maha 1982/83 continued to decrease its production to the lowest production of 13,000 metric tons in the Maha 1985/86.

The average yield per hectare for the Maha 1985/86 is estimated at 3,585 kilogrammes or 69.5 bushels. This indicates a 2.6 percent increase compared to the Maha 1983/84. However, the average yield in the Maha 1985/86 is still 3.8 percent lower than that of the Maha 1982/83 which was the highest ever recorded average yield. Increase in average yield in the Maha 1985/86 is a result of the increase in the average amount of fertilizer used per hectare and weather conditions that prevailed during the season which were less unsatisfactory than previous years. This increase in the average yield took place mainly in the areas under minor irrigation schemes where productivity was up by 9.6 percent. However, the average yield in rainfed areas decreased marginally by about 2.5 percent while the average yield in the areas under major irrigation scheme is more or less equal to the previous Maha average yield in these areas. In the Uda-Walawa agricultural district an area where almost all paddy lands come under major irrigation schemes the highest average yield of 5,093 kilogrammes per hectare was recorded. Polonnaruwa district which recorded the highest average yield in the previous Maha achieved the second highest average yield of 4,876 kilogrammes in the Maha 1985/86. As in the previous Maha Jaffna district obtained the lowest average yield (1,792 kilogrammes per hectare).

The total gross extent harvested in the Maha 1985/86 is 527,000 hectares which shows a 5.7 percent decrease compared to that of the previous Maha. The gross extent harvested decreased as a result of the decrease in the gross extent sown as well as due to an increase in the extent of crop failure. The total gross extent sown in the Maha 1985/86 is 555,000 hectares and this indicates a 2.5 percent decrease, compared with that of the previous Maha, despite the increase in the extent under asweddumized paddy land by about 1.6 percent (70,000 hectares) during the year.

PRODUCTION, AVERAGE YIELD, EXTENT HARVESTED, EXTENT SEWN, ISSUE OF FERTILIZER AND INSTITUTIONAL CREDIT IN PADDY SECTOR MAHA 1983/84 TO 1985/86

Item	Unit	1983/84			1984/85			1985/86
		Maha	Yala	Total	Maha	Yala	Total	Maha
1. Production	000 M.Tons	1,353	1,060	2,413	1,751	910	2,661	1,688
2. Average yield per hectare	Kgs.	3,031	3,146	3,076	3,498	3,343	3,464	3,585
3. Net extent harvested	'000 Hectares	451	336	787	498	270	768	469
4. Gross extent harvested	'000 Hectares	509	377	886	559	305	864	527
5. Gross extent sown	'000 Hectares	606	384	990	569	312	881	555
6. Fertilizer issued	'000 M.Tons	113	72	185	120	75	195	126
7. Institutional Credit Granted	Rs Million	136	40	176	83	37	120	

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, National Fertilizer Secretariat, People's Bank.

In the 1985/86 maha season the extent of crop failure, the difference between the extent sown and harvested, is reported at 28,000 hectares or 5.1 percent of sown extent. Though the rate of crop failure in the 1985/86 Maha increased considerably compared to the rate of 1.7 percent in the previous Maha, this is still not much higher than that of recent Maha seasons and particularly the 1983/84 Maha rate of 7 percent. When the area cultivated is considered in terms of types of irrigation usually the highest rate of crop failure (6.6 percent) is recorded from the area under rainfed. However, unexpectedly the second highest rate of crop failure (5.4 percent) was recorded from the areas under major irrigation schemes- while the lowest rate of crop failure (2.5 percent) was recorded in the areas under minor irrigation schemes.

Fertilizer use in the paddy sector in Maha seasons continued to increase from the 1981/82 Maha onwards. In the Maha 1985/86 as much as 126,000 metric tons of fertilizer was used in the paddy sector, according to the statistics compiled by the National Fertilizer Secretariat. This shows an increase of about 5 percent in total fertilizer consumption in the paddy sector in the Maha 1985/86 compared to that of the previous Maha. The average volume of fertilizer used per sown hectare in the paddy sector is estimated at 227 kilogrammes which also indicates an 8 percent increase, compared to that of the previous Maha. Increase in the use of fertilizer in the paddy sector is partly a result of the continuity in price stability in fertilizers since May 1983 when the last fertilizer price revision was made.

Credit granted by the institutional sources to the paddy sector seems to have further decreased. For instance, credit issued by the People's Bank - a main institutional credit source - to the paddy sector has dropped from Rs 35.3 million in the previous Maha to Rs 33.7 million in Maha 1985/86.

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