

**"Let us Cultivate and  
uplift the Nation"**

**National Campaign to  
Motivate  
Domestic Food Production**

**2007 - 2010**

**Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Services**

## 1.0 Introduction

From the ancient times, agriculture has a deep relationship with the social, cultural and economic aspects of Sri Lanka. However at present, the growth rate of agriculture remains at a low ebb compared to the industrial and services sectors. Its contribution to the GNP during the 2006 was 16.5% which includes plantations, fisheries and forestry sectors. Out of the total population of approximately 20 million, 32% are directly involved in agriculture for their livelihood. Around 70% of the rural population depends on agriculture and 25% to 30% of them still live far below the poverty line. Besides, per capita consumption of many food items remains below the minimum nutritional requirement level while 30% of the rural children below 05 years suffer from malnutrition. Yet 32% of the country's food requirement is imported spending nearly Rs. Billion 100.0 per year. In 2006 approximately a sum of Rs. Billion 49.0 has been spent on food imports which include supplementary food crops and fruits excluding milk, fish and sugar.

In the context of the current economic situation of the country it is difficult to spend such a colossal amount of money on food imports when we are capable of producing many such food items locally.

In view of the ever-increasing demand for agricultural products in other countries for food and industrial needs, possibility of importing such items in future diminishes increasingly.

Although 86% of the total land area of the country has been utilized for various purposes, only 57% of the land is utilized for food crop production excluding plantation and export crops.

A total of 730,000 ha are available for paddy cultivation out of which nearly 120,000 ha are left out even in a successful Maha season due to various reasons. Similarly out of 130,000 ha suitable for supplementary food crops, nearly 40,000 ha remain uncultivated.

Productivity of local food crops remains at a low level while it has not been able to reach the highest potential yield of paddy and other field crops yet.

Although a wide range of vegetables are cultivated extensively in the country, the production is sufficient only to meet one half of the minimum per capita consumption of 72 kg per year recommended by medical research.

According to the Census of 2002, agricultural lands totaling 1.56 million of hectares have been partitioned among 3.25 million personnel involved in

farming. Among them, 382,300 personnel own only the home garden while 559,241 personnel own the home garden as well as additional lands. 700,361 personnel own only a land without a home garden. It has been revealed that more than 90% of those land plots could be cultivated with food crops even in small quantities to meet their daily food requirements.

Therefore it is not proper for Sri Lanka to continue as a food importer. Development of a country depends on the improvement of infra-structure and services for which foreign exchange is required. This can be considerably sustained by reducing the food import bill. Therefore sustainable development of this country could be achieved only by rapidly increasing the food production promoting the local food production and imposing restrictions on unnecessary food imports.

The contribution from the agricultural sector for the development of the country should be increased and in order to achieve this an island-wide accelerated program will be launched for local food production namely, *Deshiya Ahara Nishpadana Diri Genvime Jathika Meheyuma* (National Campaign to Motivate Domestic Food Production) under the theme, *Api Wawamu-Rata Hadamu* (Let us cultivate and uplift the country) through short and long term strategies. The programme will continue over a period of three years (2007-2010) commencing 2007/08 Maha season.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Programme

Following objectives are to be achieved through this national operation due to commence on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2007 targeting 2007/08 Maha season.

1. Increasing the production of essential food crops
2. Enhancing the contribution of agriculture to the GNP
3. Ensuring the food and nutrition security of the people
4. Improving the consumption pattern of the people
5. Reduction of foreign exchange spent on food imports annually
6. Improving the income of the farming community
7. Reducing the use of chemical fertilizer by 25% in the next 03 years by enhancing the use of organic manure
8. Dissemination of modern and appropriate technologies
9. Encouraging youth towards agriculture
10. Promoting environment-friendly and local/traditional agricultural methods



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## 2.0 Promotion of Home Gardening

Paddy field, chena and home garden are identified as the main components of the traditional agriculture in Sri Lanka. Development of home garden can be considered as a tool to address the existing problems of increasing cost of living, malnutrition and food insecurity etc. Under this program, cultivation of vegetables, fruits, yams and herbal plants will be encouraged to meet their daily needs, which will support the following objectives. This constitutes cultivating their own food needs as they require, promoting production of chemical-free food through propagation of environmentally-friendly cultivation methods, promotion of family nutrition, health and economic improvement. Attention will also be paid to the capacity of the family to invest, provide labour, and their dedication shown in developing the home garden, considering the agro-climatic regions. Furthermore, owners are encouraged to use organic fertilizer as far as possible. Home gardening paves the way for minimizing the losses during the exchange of goods between the producer and the consumer. It is expected to develop the following types of home gardens with the participation of all communities, expecting the contribution of all types of individuals in the society. Home gardening could be categorized in the following manner:

1. Rural & urban home gardens
2. School home gardens
3. Home gardens of school children
4. Home gardens & model farms in office premises
5. Home gardens in security forces camps
6. Private home gardens of state officials
7. Home gardens in office premises of the private institutions
8. Home gardens of public representatives

### 2.1 Rural & Urban Home Gardening

This includes the home gardening to be developed targeting nearly 4.0 million families living in rural and urban areas. Necessary instructions & guidance for people living in rural areas will be provided by Agricultural Research & Production Assistants, Grama Niladharies and Samurdhi Officers who are required to establish one model home garden each in their respective command areas. Urban population too is encouraged to practice urban home gardening in limited spaces available under which cultivation technologies such as hydroponics will be promoted.

## **2.2 Home Gardening in School Premises**

Home gardens and demonstrations will be established in all National and Provincial schools totaling 9714. This program will be implemented by the Principal of each school under the patronage of the Ministry of Education, who is expected to establish crops suitable to the agro-climate of the area. This is expected to improve the aesthetic values in the school while bringing about attitudinal changes as well as contribution to the national food production.

## **2.3 School Children's Personal Home Gardens**

The entire student population exceeding 3.8 million will be requested to establish home gardens in their own premises with the assistance of other members of the family. It is expected that this will contribute their share for the family income while attracting them to agriculture as well as building a generation which respects the environment.

## **2.4 Home Gardening and Demonstrations in Official Quarters and Office Premises**

Arrangements will be made to establish home gardens and demonstrations in the premises of all the Departments and Statutory Institutions. Necessary guidance for this will be provided by the Ministry of Public Administration. This not only will strengthen the National Food Production Drive but also a conversion of the entire society towards agriculture.

It will be made necessary for the occupants in Government quarters to establish their own home garden. Purchasing of seeds and planting material will be facilitated.

## **2.5. Cultivations within camps of security forces**

Open spaces are abundantly available within security forces camps where multitude of crops can be cultivated. Necessary arrangement will be made to increase the food crop production utilizing such available lands with the technology available with Department of Agriculture under the patronage of officials of the Ministry of Defense and Security Forces.

## 2.6 Public Officers' Personal Home Gardens

Majority out of nearly 0.8 million public officials live outside official quarters. Hence arrangements will be made for them to contribute towards National Food Product Campaign through promoting to establish home gardens in their premises.

## 2.7 Premises of Private Institutions

The national food production drive will be extended to even Private Sector premises along with the State Sector. Under this, the private sector offices and industrial sites will be promoted to establish their own home gardens and demonstrations.

## 2.8 Home Gardens of the Public Representatives

All public representatives including His Excellency the President, Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Provincial Councilors, Local Government and Pradeshiya Sabha members are also invited to establish home garden in their own premises. Through this, it is expected to strengthen the national food production drive by example.

## 3.0 Increasing the Food Production

Food production is directly related to the day-to-day life of the people as well as food security of the country. Therefore necessary steps will be taken to grow most important crops which are either raw material for agro-industries or for which we spend a large sum of foreign exchange for importing.

### 3.1 Selected Crops

Under the National Food Production Campaign measures will be taken to increase the production of the following food crops:

- I. Paddy
- II. Other field crops - maize, kurakkan, chili, big onion/red onion, green gram, cowpea, soybean, groundnut, black gram
- III. Fruit s - banana, papaw, pineapple, grapes, mango delum, avocado, mangosteen, rambuttan



IV. Vegetables	- bean, brinjal, bandakka, dambala, tomato, long bean, bushita, green leaves
V. Yams	- potato, sweet potato, kiri-ala
VI. Spices	- ginger, cinnamon, pepper, cardamom, tamarind

Under this program uncultivated fallow lands and barren lands will be utilized for cultivation with the aim of increasing the indigenous food production. Enhancing the productivity of each crop is important, and therefore special programmes will be implemented in this regard.

In the process of increasing other field crops (OFC) production, crops will be selected based on crop zoning according to the potential in each district. This will help to minimize the obstacles for finding raw material for agro-based industries and reduce the marketing problems while facilitating the technology adoption as well.

### 3.2 Paddy Cultivation

Although Sri Lanka has achieved self sufficiency in rice, reports reveal that per capita wheat flour consumption remains at 40 kg per year. Although there appears a rice surplus within the country, it is essential to increase the rice production if we want to reduce wheat flour consumption at least by 10%. For this purpose improved seed technology will be adopted in addition to the cultivation of fallow lands in the wet-zone. Growing traditional paddy varieties will be encouraged in the wet zone. Production of new rice-based products will also be promoted. Besides, cultivation of *Ma vee* varieties will also be promoted within selected districts of wet-zone.

Approximately 113,000 ha was covered under the Granary Area Programme in high potential major irrigation areas where average yield has reached around 6.0 tons per ha. At the end of the proposed period further extent of 164,000 ha in major irrigation areas will be covered under 'Saruketa' programme. As a result national average paddy yield is expected to increase from 4 t/ha to 5 t/ha.

Steps will be taken to enhance the quality of rice, facilitate for consumers to obtain rice of their choice through rice branding, and increase the consumption of rice and rice flour through promoting rice-based products.