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Factors Affecting the Adoption of Organic Pepper Farming in India

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Abstract

India is well-known for the production of spices and was ranked first with around 3.1 million metric tons of spices in 2004. India's share in the world spice market is 48% in quantity and 43% in value. Thus, Indian economy is influenced by the spice sector, which has the potential for growing more than 25 cash crops.

Pepper is originally from the Malabar Coast, Kerala, India. Kerala produces more than 90% of pepper, which is an important source of livelihood for more than 80% of people living in this state. Pepper in this region is grown traditionally as a backyard crop. Frequent occurrence of diseases, depletion of soil fertility, and a small land holding size are severe constraints to pepper production. In addition, the farm gate price of pepper from 1999 to 2000 was Rs 215 kg⁻¹ y⁻¹ but it decreased to Rs 74 kg⁻¹ y⁻¹ from 2003 to 2004. The domestic prices are highly dependent on international pepper prices and are hence fluctuating. All these factors have made pepper production unremunerative. Adoption of organic farming is an alternative approach to address these problems and benefit the small farmers in a sustainable and eco-friendly way.

This research attempts to find out the factors affecting organic farming adoption by small scale pepper farmers in Kerala. Here, information is collected from a cross-sectional data of 200 small scale pepper farmers, 100 conventional and 100 organic. In this study, logit analysis is used to examine the factors affecting adoption in terms of community set-up, socio economic characteristics and perception. The results will help understand the driving factors behind organic pepper production in India. This will enable developing policies more suitable for developing small scale organic agriculture in India.

Keywords: Adoption, logit analysis, organic farming, pepper