

BARRIERS AND DRIVERS TO ADAPT THE CHEMICAL LEASING CONCEPT AMONG FULL-TIME MEDIUM-SCALE VEGETABLE FARMERS IN NUWARA ELIYA DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT DIVISION

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1. Introduction

Upcountry vegetable farming is considerably commercialized. Thus, the heavy use of synthetic agrochemicals is a popular feature within Nuwara Eliya DSD. This excessive agrochemical use is the basis of the problems of health degradation, higher production costs, and environmental damage. Chemical Leasing enables users to reduce the costs of high chemical use, environmental and health harm, and chemical overuse. However, Chemical Leasing is still new in Nuwara Eliya DSD. Therefore, the researcher conducted this study to identify barriers and drivers to adapt to the Chemical Leasing concept among full-time medium-scale vegetable farmers in Nuwara Eliya DSD.

2. Research Methodology

The researcher employed the mixed-method approach, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 30 full-time medium-scale vegetable farmers in Nuwara Eliya DSD. The qualitative data were analyzed employing thematic analysis, and the participative ranking method was used to analyze quantitative data.

3. Findings and Discussion

The study separated barriers and drivers into three categories: the most significant, less significant, and other to adapt Chemical Leasing among farmers. Therefore, the six most significant barriers, i.e., Unawareness, Doubtfulness, Uncertain Weather, Risky View, Lack of Framework, and Soil Infertility, and the six most significant drivers, such as Time Saving, Solution for Agrochemical Shortage, Avoiding Inferior Agrochemicals Importing, Cost Reduction, Healthy Producing, and Getting Expert Knowledge were identified as the findings of the study.

4. Conclusion and Implications

Chemical Leasing is a practical solution for problems farmers face in the researched area, i.e., reducing the agrochemical cost, preventing harm to the environment and human health, and minimizing chemical overuse. However, several barriers discourage farmers from adapting to this concept. Hence, awareness, trust-building, and financial risk management programs are recommended to overcome the barriers. Finally, since irregular agrochemical usage confuses the entire farming system, modern technology like Chemical Leasing is suggested to be implemented within Nuwara Eliya DSD.

Keywords: Barriers, Drivers, Chemical Leasing, Excessive Agrochemical Use, Nuwara Eliya DSD.