Study of Sri Lankan Spice Export Control System and Its Compliance to Requirements of Major Exporting Regions

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Known as "the Spice Island", Sri Lanka has a renowned history of unique aromatic spices. Major spices of Sri Lanka are cinnamon, pepper, clove, cardamom, nutmeg and mace. This study examined the spice export control system of Sri Lanka giving emphasis to existing standards and regulations and its compliance to requirements of major exporting regions. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted in identifying the major spices produced, major exporting regions, value chains and the key stakeholders in the spice export control system. Primary information was collected through interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholder groups and secondary data by referring to statistical data, standards, and reports available on spices. According to the results major exporting regions were identified as India, European Union, United States of America, Middle Eastern Countries, Mexico and Japan. According to the comparative analysis of these importing country requirements, majority of spice export rejections are resulting from safety issues such as not adhering to limits specified for microbial contaminations, heavy metals, toxins and additives. And major lapses in the initial stages of value chains were identified as the lack of knowledge among the farmers on quality aspects, lack of value addition in spices, inferior quality of spices, unnecessary intermediaries in the value chains and absence of a decentralized management system. Adoption of standard certifications such as Good Agricultural Practices, Good Manufacturing practices and HACCP approach is a major lapse in production and manufacturing sectors of Sri Lankan spices. The study proposes the authorities to give major emphasis to improve specifications mainly MRLs for pesticide residues, microbial contaminants and toxins in national standards and promoting adoption of quality and safety management systems to make the system export ready. A holistic approach from farm to fork needs to be followed to improve the credibility of the system.

Keywords: Spices, Export Control System, Stakeholders, DEA, Quality

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