

Importance of Coconut in the Districts

Although coconuts are cultivated in almost all parts of the country, the importance of the crop varies considerably among regions. The Western, North Western and Southern provinces account for 83 percent of the total coconut lands in the country. The importance of coconut in various districts is summarised below:

(a) Coconut is the principal crop in the agricultural economies of Kurunegala, Puttalam, Colombo and Hambantota districts. In all these districts, coconuts account for well over one-half of the total land area under principal agricultural crops (i.e. tea, rubber, coconut and paddy).

—The largest coconut acreage is found in the Kurunegala district (387,000 acres) occupying one-third of the total land area and 70 percent of the agricultural crop area (main crops only) in the district. This district also accounts for one-third of the total coconut lands in Sri Lanka.

—The second largest coconut acreage is found in the Colombo district (220,000 acres) occupying 43 percent of the total area and 65 percent of the agricultural crop area in the district.

—The third largest coconut acreage is found in Puttalam district (146,000 acres) occupying 20 percent of the land area and 85 percent of agricultural crop area in the district.

—The fourth in importance is Hambantota district with about 70,000 acres, occupying some 14 percent of the total land area and 58 percent of the total agricultural crop area in the district.

These four districts account for 73 percent of the total coconut lands in the country.

(b) Kegalle district is also an important coconut growing area with about 70,000 acres under coconut occupying some 17 percent of the total land area of the district. But the importance of coconut is overshadowed by rubber (which accounts for about one-half of the total agricultural crop area). Coconuts (with about one-quarter of the agricultural area) occupies a second place.

(c) Substantial coconut acreages (approx. 115,000 acres) are found in the Matara and Kalutara districts where coconuts rank either second or third in importance from the

point of view of land utilization.

(d) Coconut lands between 20,000-30,000 acres are found in four districts; namely, Jaffna (where coconut is the second most important crop, next to paddy); Matale (where coconut ranks on par with tea and rubber but second to paddy); Kandy (where it is third in importance but way behind the leading crop, tea); and Ratnapura (where it ranks below rubber, tea and paddy).

(e) The districts of the Eastern Province, taken together have about 28,000 acres of coconut among them, and coconut is the second most important crop (but far behind the lead-

District-wise Distribution of Coconut Lands

District	Coconut (000acres)	Percent of total area
Kurunegala	387	33.6
Colombo	220	19.1
Puttalam	146	12.7
Hambantota	90	7.8
Kegalle	70	6.1
Kalutara	38	3.3
Galle	37	3.2
Matale	21	1.8
Kandy	21	1.8
Ratnapura	28	2.4
Jaffna	30	2.6
Batticaloa, Amparal and Trincomalee	28	2.4
Total	1,153	100.0

ing crop, paddy). The bulk of the coconut lands in the Province were destroyed by the cyclone of 1978.

